

*St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act*

He tried to use all his skill as a counsel in order to obscure what is the essential fact; and the essential fact is this. That increase in the cost of the Welland ship canal will be paid for by the users of that canal; the farmers of western Canada, the manufacturers of western Ontario and the consumers of Canada west and east. Those are the people who will pay for the outrageous miscalculations for which the hon. gentleman is primarily responsible. I know that he has sought tonight to conceal the fact that over \$21 million of contracts were let by him in his capacity as president of the St. Lawrence seaway authority for a project for which the department of which he was head—he was the responsible minister—estimated the cost to be \$1,157,000. The hon. gentleman says to us tonight, "What ought the present government to have done?" They accepted it, he says. They accepted the figures that were put forward he claims. Well, what does he suggest? Does he suggest that the expenditures or that the amount of \$21 million and more put into this project ought to have been abandoned by the present government? Ought they to have repudiated the contracts which my hon. friend entered into, the very contracts which bore his signature? What would he have said in the House of Commons tonight if this government had repudiated the contracts which bore his signature?

There is one thing that I neglected to mention earlier. The hon. gentleman says that he did not know there was rock there. Did they think that Niagara Falls is made of sand or green cheese or what? Really, Mr. Chairman, how nonsensical can the hon. gentleman be in his approach to this issue? All the previous government intended to do at the outset was to dredge silt. Apparently the nasty old rock got in the way. The last time I heard that story, it was the reverse. The story then was that they intended only to excavate rock but it was the nasty old water that got in the way that time. I refer to the subterranean passages in the printing bureau. How desperate and unfortunate can the hon. gentleman be? First he has a surplus of water and then he has a surplus of rock. If he could only achieve a balance between them, how happy would he be.

The hon. gentleman draws the attention of this committee to the budget of the St. Lawrence seaway authority and he suggests to this committee that this was produced before the house in a manner to assure parliamentary control over the expenditures of the authority of which he was head. All right. I have in my hand the estimated capital expenditures during the fiscal period January 1 to January

31, 1956, and under the heading "Total Estimated Expenditures" we find under the Welland section \$9,620,000 as the total estimated expenditure for that section and the amount to be expended during the year 1956 is \$3,510,000. It was revealed to the committee this afternoon that during that same period of 1956 the hon. gentleman put his signature to contracts worth \$19,500,000. That is the type of estimating the hon. gentleman does. The hon. gentleman in his fury tonight assured us that at all times he disclosed to the house the full facts. In his estimate in his budget he discloses \$9,620,000 as the total and \$3,510,000 for that year, and he puts his own signature to \$19,500,000 worth of contracts. Mr. Chairman, I do not rest my case on that. What I submit to the committee and to the country in putting before them the facts is this, and I do not need to do it with the fury which the hon. gentleman developed this evening.

**Mr. Habel:** The hon. gentleman is doing worse.

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** Let me deal directly, honestly and honourably with the charge that the member for Carleton has been something less than assiduous in the discharge of his duty in not raising this matter in the year 1957 or 1958 rather than 1959.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** When the hon. gentleman was parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** Oh, the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate is raising the suggestion that I was parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I was parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Or is the hon. gentleman overlooking that?

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** I include that in exactly what I am going to say. I say to the hon. member for Laurier that the best way to beg an issue is to ask, as he did tonight, "why didn't you do it before?"

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** I am not the one who is begging the issue. As far as I am concerned, I have never desired to score debating points in respect of this issue. The straightforward reason why the member for Carleton did not enter into this issue previously was just this. He was a new member in the house, 20 years the junior of the hon. member for Laurier, and was trying to learn many things in this house in a short period of time. That is the honourable answer to my hon. friend. It was only when I had the opportunity in recent