

*The Budget—Mr. Grégoire*

make possible. A pamphlet has just been published in Montreal. The author teaches at the École des Hautes Études Commerciales in Montreal; he is Mr. Michel Brochu, a geographer holding doctorates in literature and natural sciences from the University of Paris. Professor Michel Brochu has studied this problem and, I believe, it is time for the Canadian government, which is supposed to have jurisdiction over the St. Lawrence to accept its responsibilities and do something on that score.

In his pamphlet on winter navigation on the St. Lawrence Professor Brochu mentions that the methods now being used by the icebreakers on the St. Lawrence, on the orders of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer) are preposterous and unrealistic.

Professor Brochu says this in his booklet:

In fact, the captains of the ships can reach Montreal against their better judgment and at their own risk without the guaranteed assistance of the icebreakers. The port of Montreal remains open with guaranteed services to the ships who succeed in crossing the blockade.

As far as the government of Canada is concerned, its attitude is the following: let the St. Lawrence freeze completely between Montreal and Lake St. Peter and wait for those strange winter floods to happen and effect the southern suburbs of Montreal and which are precisely brought on by the ice cover which is allowed to form and deepen and under which millions of crystals of ice under pressure following the Lachine rapids accumulate and block the flow of water.

That is when the icebreakers, which are supposed to help prevent and control floods in the Montreal area, are dispatched from far away, from their winter quarters in Sorel or Trois-Rivières, to fight this disaster. However, before they can get near Montreal, they have to make their way through thick ice, tens of miles long; more often than not, when they arrive in Montreal, the floods have already ebbed and the damage has been done.

● (3:40 p.m.)

However, what Department of Transport officials are very careful not to divulge—and those experts cannot fail to know it—is that a radical solution to the flood problem in the communities south of Montreal would be, in fact, to tackle the problem, right from the start and all winter long, that is to handle the cause of the floods, the ice which covers the St. Lawrence right across, between Montreal and Trois-Rivières. The means to do it is self-evident, given a single moment's thought: Ice must simply be prevented from forming in the navigable channel by having an ice-breaker go upstream and downstream every day as soon as the ice starts to form.

The cause being eliminated, there would no longer be any flood, but the implacable and ineluctable consequence of such a logical step would be that ocean-going vessels could go through the seaway all through the winter.

The most astonishing thing is that the people and the main newspapers of Montreal could have believed such a tale (the flood story). None of them saw through that subterfuge which costs Montreal millions of dollars every year.

The situation, Mr. Speaker, is well described. Ice is allowed to accumulate and when the floods begin, the icebreakers docked in Trois-Rivières or Sorel are told: Go and do your job. More icebreakers must then be sent out because the ice is thicker; it takes them more time to reach the flooded areas and, by the time they get there, millions of dollars of damage have been caused. If the icebreakers were allowed to circulate before the ice thickens or before a layer of ice forms, the channel would always be open and there would never be any danger of flood.

Moreover, the government would spend less money because, even if the icebreakers are moored at Sorel or at Trois-Rivières, even if they remain in their home port, the engines must be kept running to keep the ships warm. The personnel and the sailors who work on them are paid just the same; they must still be provided with room and board. Therefore the expenses are the same as if the icebreakers were making regular trips between Montreal and Trois-Rivières.

Just a month ago, that is on November 7 last, the newspaper *La Presse* published an editorial in which Mr. Guy Cormier had the following to say and I quote:

Even if the government refuses to recognize officially that icebreakers have another mission apart from flood control, a realistic attitude would still require a logical organization of that control, that is by ordering ice-breakers to prevent the piling up of a heavy sheet of ice, the remote cause of destructive floods. It would be sufficient for an ice-breaker to sail downstream as soon as the ice is set.

As Mr. Brochu wrote: "The implacable and inescapable consequence of that action would be that the way would be clear to ocean liners throughout winter".

How long will the government persist in keeping up appearances that fool no one, after all?

Mr. Speaker, that is taken from an editorial in *La Presse*. There was also an item on the editorial page of *Le Devoir* of November 6, 1967, practically along the same lines.

Winter navigation on the St. Lawrence would cost less than the present method of preventing flooding, because 5 or 7 ice-breakers would not be needed then to break the ice in case of flooding. In fact, three or four in constant use would be enough to prevent the ice from setting. It would cost less to the