

APPEALS FOR ACTION ON ST. LAWRENCE WATERWAYS

MR. CHEVRIER'S CORNWALL SPEECH: Stating that "the time has arrived for plain speaking" on the St. Lawrence Waterways, the Minister of Transport, Mr. Chevrier, said on September 14 "something must be done about this soon. Many of our citizens both here and elsewhere in Canada, are getting very impatient."

The Minister said that if no progress could be made on the combined scheme of navigation and power development, as outlined in the treaty signed by Canada and the United States in 1941, as would unfortunately seem to be the case, the application for power development by the Province of Ontario and the State of New York should be referred to the International Joint Commission for consideration and that "Canada should explore the possibility of constructing a deep waterway on the Canadian side of the boundary."

100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Chevrier was speaking on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the union of the Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry in his home town, Cornwall, which is the focal point of the international section of the St. Lawrence River. The Minister also officiated at the unveiling of a memorial plaque which commemorates the centenary of the United Counties.

In his statement on the St. Lawrence Waterways situation, the Minister said:

"The St. Lawrence River in this area forms a bottleneck which impedes navigation of lake and ocean craft. The Long Sault Rapids have a potential 2,200,000 horse-power of electric energy, awaiting harnessing. This development has been awaited by our people for a long time. Ever since I was a boy, we have been talking around here about the development of the St. Lawrence waterway. Many difficulties stand in the way. One of them is that the international boundary line separating Canada and the United States runs up the middle of the river, and this is why negotiations extending over many years have had to be carried on between our two countries.

"These negotiations began as far back as 1895. They culminated in three agreements. First, the Niagara Convention, signed by our two countries in 1929, but never ratified. Second, the St. Lawrence Deep Waterway Treaty of 1932, signed by our two countries, but which was not ratified by the United States Senate because the treaty lacked the two-thirds affirmative vote required by that body. Third, the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Basin Agreement, signed by our two countries in 1941 and which has become bogged down in the American Congress.

"I believe that now is the time for action on the St. Lawrence Waterways, and that the

time has arrived for plain speaking thereon. There is every reason for proceeding with this project now. From the military, economic and strategic viewpoints, the combined development of navigation and power on the St. Lawrence should be carried out at once and should no longer be delayed. It is inconceivable that Lake carriers should continue to be bottled up in the Great Lakes and not be able to come down to Montreal because of a short series of fourteen-foot draft canals. It is inconceivable likewise that iron ore in urgent demand in the Great Lakes area should be blocked from moving westward for the same reason. It is no less inconceivable that water power urgently required for military and industrial purposes, both by the Province of Ontario and the State of New York, should go to waste and serve only as a tourist attraction for thousands of visitors. Something must be done about this soon, and many of our citizens both here and elsewhere in Canada, are getting very impatient.

COMBINED DEVELOPMENT

"To my mind, the combined development of power and navigation on the St. Lawrence as outlined in the 1941 treaty, with certain reservation made by the State Department offers the best solution and should be approved. The people of Canada want this development. The Government of the United States has declared itself in favour of it on many occasions. But we cannot sit idly by and wait forever. If the Congress of the United States does not want to take action, we should know. Industry in Ontario is absorbing about 100,000 additional horsepower a year and lack of further power supply will have the effect of retarding industrial expansion in this Province. If there are interests in the United States that are going to stand in the way of the development forever, Canadians ought to be told. After we are convinced that no progress can be made on the combined scheme -- and unfortunately that seems to be the case -- then I believe that Canada should consent to the reference of the applications of Ontario and New York State to the International Joint Commission for consideration. In that event, I personally believe that Canada should also explore the possibility of constructing a deep waterway on the Canadian side of the boundary. Already we have fourteen-foot draft canals on this side; they can be deepened to twenty-seven feet. Engineers have clearly demonstrated that this is feasible and we would have a perfect right to proceed with such a development.

"I make these observations at a time when for military, economic and strategic reasons, we should press for action...."