

The development of passenger and freight traffic also followed the Canadian water routes from Quebec and Montreal up the St. Lawrence river to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. On these routes, however, an elaborate system of portages was required and no improvement in this system took place until canals were built to bypass the rapids and the other obstacles to navigation.

The first attempt to build a canal in Canada was made in the early part of the eighteenth century. The Sulpician order attempted to construct a shallow canal to bypass the Lachine Rapids, but due to a lack of funds, the project was never completed. The first successful project was the series of locks and canals built by the Royal Engineers between 1779 and 1783 to provide 2-foot draft navigation between Lake St. Louis and Lake St. Francis.

The advent of the steamship to Canada in the early 1800's brought about a real improvement in transportation on the St. Lawrence and on the lakes, but it was still necessary to resort to various time-consuming expedients to surmount the obstacles on the waterways. Frequently stage coaches and flat-bottom "Durham" boats were used in the portaging operations in conjunction with the steamships.

Only minor canal works were carried on from time to time until 1821 when the building of a 5-foot canal at Lachine was undertaken, and in 1825 when private interests embarked on the building of the Welland Canal to provide eight foot navigation between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Since then, Canada has been engaged, almost without interruption, in the extension and development of her system of canals, the main purpose being to provide navigation facilities from Montreal through to the Great Lakes.

And now in July, 1958, we find ourselves engaged, with the United States, in navigating a man-made lake, the construction of which was one of the greatest engineering feats of the day. The St. Lawrence Seaway is a vital part of the St.-Lawrence-Great Lakes waterway which has rightly been described as the world's greatest inland navigation system, which extends more than 2,000 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the western end of Lake Superior and overcomes a difference of 600 feet in water levels.

In closing, I would like to say that in my opinion all Canadians are taking the greatest interest in what has been accomplished this week and when the Seaway is completed next year and opened to navigation, we will have every cause to take pride in the engineering achievement of our engineers.