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Wednesday  
10th March, 1943

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HOUSE DIGEST

Denies  
Report  
of St.  
Lawrence  
Sinkings

Mr. Graydon asked for a further statement regarding the assertion of Hormidas Langlais in the Quebec Legislature that upward of thirty ships were sunk in the St. Lawrence last season and that U-boats had a point of assembly at Pointe Aux Anglais.

Mr. Macdonald said he had previously denied the same statement, made by Hon. Onesime Gagnon. Naval records showed that twenty merchant vessels had been sunk in the St. Lawrence last season and there was no knowledge of any others. He reviewed his previous denials of the various statements made. There had not been five ships sunk in one day; the sinkings had not included two U.S. destroyers. He had asked Mr. Gagnon for the list of sinkings that the latter had said to be in his possession, but it was not forthcoming. Careful search had revealed no trace of submarine bases in the St. Lawrence area and the fact was that U-boats had sufficient range to operate without the need of such bases. There had been twice as many sinkings in the Gulf of Mexico, which was two thousand miles further from Europe.

He added that in two months a new navigation season would open, when it would require every possible precaution and the co-operation of everyone to safeguard shipping. The disclosure of information through questions in parliament was not in the interests of the country.

Hon. R. B. Hanson asked if it were true that a naval ship had been absent from duty to escort a party from Rimouski to a fishing river on the north shore last summer.

Mr. Macdonald said it was completely untrue.

D. K. Hazen (C) St. John-Albert asked if port-workers could be assured that gulf navigation would be resumed at the opening of this season.

Mr. Macdonald said that no decision had been reached to close the St. Lawrence.

Question from J. G. Diefenbaker (C) Lake Centre whether there had been strict enforcement of selective service regulations in the last few months was accepted as notice.

BUDGET DEBATE:

A. H. Bence (C) Saskatoon discussed the Western flax situation and asked why a flax processing plant was being located in Hamilton when there was none in Saskatoon. He recognized that it was not a Government plant but thought the Government should intervene.