

Above Prescott, large lake freighters can navigate to the head of the Great Lakes. The biggest of them carry more than 20,000 tons of cargo, and are said to provide the cheapest transportation in the world. But only small vessels, carrying 3,000 tons or less, can navigate the 114 miles between Prescott and Montreal.

You will readily see that the five Great Lakes are the bottle, while the St. Lawrence River between Prescott and Montreal is the neck. The seaway project, which Canada is ready to undertake, would remove that bottleneck. The proposal is to dam the river to develop available power, which will flood out the rapids with artificial lakes, to by-pass the power dams with the short canals, and to do such other works as will provide a continuous 27-foot navigation waterway.

Major works of the project are located at three points: the International Rapids section; the Soulanges section; and the Lachine section. Of these three projects, work in the International Rapids section is the most extensive and costly. The basic power development in this section includes an upper control dam near Iroquois and a main dam and powerhouse above Cornwall. The 1941 treaty between our countries proposed that the navigation canal, by-passing these dams, would be on the United States' side of the river, but there is nothing to prevent these canals being built on the Canadian side instead, given the basic power development. In fact, such alternative plans have been prepared.

The Soulanges section is wholly within Canada, in Quebec Province. Here the major portion of the work has already been done in connection with the existing Beauharnois power development. Thanks to the foresight of the Canadian Government, the wide power canal was designed to serve as a link in the deep-water seaway. The navigation work remaining to be done is little more than the installation of locks at the lower end of the power canal, for which provision has been made, and the dredging of connecting channels.

Finally, in the Lachine section, which is immediately above Montreal Harbour, the minimum development would be for navigation only. In that event, the main works would consist of channel enlargement and a 10-mile canal with locks. But, in this section also, there is potential for a large-scale power development that would provide an even better navigation link. The Province of Quebec is directly concerned with the power development, and discussions have been opened which may lead to building a combined power and navigation project.

So much for an outline of the work involved in the project proposed to be undertaken by Canada. You may now be asking the question: "What is the demand for power, and what are the needs of navigation that make the project so urgent today?"

Let me say at once that circumstances have changed completely since 1941, when the project was first advanced in its present form. Then, the demand for power was growing at a comparatively slow rate. It promised to take a considerable number of years for such a large new block of power to be absorbed, particularly in Ontario, and that province still had other smaller hydro sites to develop as needed.