

granted, from what I have seen in both of the Ottawa evening newspapers, that some action is to be taken in the near future, and I would like to ask the honourable leader of this House exactly what that action is to be.

But before I come to that, I would like to make a few remarks with regard to this great scheme, and refer to some points raised in the Committee. Let me say again to this honourable House that this question is not a new one: it has been before Parliament in different ways during the last twenty years. It came up first in 1908. I was a member of the House of Commons at that time. The St. Lawrence Power Company presented a Bill before Parliament asking for power to build a transmission line from Cornwall to Brockville; and the propaganda has gone forward that all along the line we would thus, for the first time, have electric lights. I thought I knew all that was going on at the time, but I did not know until that Bill came before Parliament that the Aluminum Company of Massena had purchased this company, and to my surprise their Bill contained a clause that gave that power company the right to build a dam—exactly what is being proposed now—and develop power on the St. Lawrence at the Long Sault Rapids.

Of course, we opposed that clause, and at that time the fact came out that the Aluminum Company was the owner of the St. Lawrence Power Company. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was then in power, and Right Honourable Mr. Graham was Minister of Railways and Canals, and they, with their supporters, and assistance from the Opposition side, succeeded in having that clause thrown out, and the Bill practically nullified in consequence. So that the transmission line was never proceeded with. That was the first time that I, or I believe any member of the Commons, knew that the Aluminum Company were the owners of the power company situated at Cornwall.

That is not the first time that that company has tried to get this concession. At present they have a concession, through the St. Lawrence Power Company, which to my mind is unfair; and although it is very small to a certain extent they will have the Government of Canada by the throat, if I may use that phrase, for the next fifty years, because of a contract given in 1896 to the St. Lawrence Power Company, which was then owned by a private gentleman, the contractor. He got the right to develop 2,500 horse-power and, the contract contained a clause that this company was to furnish sufficient power to open the gates and to furnish lights along the canal. That contract did not involve very much

horse-power, but electricity was not known then as it is to-day. The Minister at that time gave a contract for what I have since understood would be from 50 to 100 horse-power, at the very most, because, according to the reports from the Department, there was a certain quantity of horse-power necessary for each lock. That contract was given at \$63.00 per horse-power for 20 years, renewable at a rate so far as rental only was concerned. That was 11 years before the canal was finished, and nothing was done under that contract. At that time it transpired that the St. Lawrence Power Company had been sold to the Aluminum Company, and that contract was again renewed for 89 years, I think—11 years off 100; and we are paying \$63.00 for horse-power, and will do so for another 50 or 60 years, on account of that contract so made.

But that was not the worst of it. When the company got the contract renewed, or changed, they made the minimum 400 horse-power, and the lights some 274. The result was that the contract was really so unreasonable that I understand the Government decided that it would be better to expropriate this company, and do the lighting themselves. But the Aluminum Company having purchased the power company for some \$536,000, they immediately issued bonds to the amount of \$1,700,000 against the enterprise so that it was much cheaper for us to continue paying the \$63.00 horse-power than for the Government to buy the company and pay interest on \$1,700,000 worth of bonds.

That action of this Company made me a little suspicious as to carrying on any agreement with them. But we have had a little more experience. I think all the members of the Committee remember that it was brought out that a dam had been placed across the South Sault Rapids; that a channel was obstructed, but the obstruction was to be removed by the end of the war, or in five years at the most. They have failed to remove it, and have refused to do so, although it is ten years now since the war. It appears that the United States Government cannot force them, on account of the powers given to this Company under a charter.

The present position of that Company leads me to insist that everything that is done in connection with the St. Lawrence Waterway should be done direct with the United States Government, so that when any question comes up, or any dispute, or rearrangement, we will only have to deal with that Government, and not be forced to take such a course as we have had to pursue in the Chicago drainage case.

Again I refer to the Chicago drainage canal. Honourable gentlemen will remember that so