

Supply—Veterans Affairs

authority in the amount of \$13,200,000 in such manner and subject to such terms and conditions as the governor in council may approve, \$13,200,000.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with item 107d, are we not?

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Laprise: Then I wish to ask the minister a question about the deficits of the St. Lawrence seaway authority which asks for a reimbursement of \$27,092,866. Is it expected that those deficits will continue for a long time?

And further on, there is another item asking for the conversion of the sum of \$21,800,000.

Could the minister tell us if it is expected that the situation will improve to the extent that such deficits of the St. Lawrence seaway authority will be eliminated? Also what happens to the interests due by that authority?

[Text]

Mr. Pickersgill: I think perhaps I was not explicit enough in my explanation of both of these items. The Welland canal is under the administration of the St. Lawrence seaway, but since there is no revenue collected and the Welland canal will always be in a deficit position, unless and until we impose tolls on it, it was felt it would be unfair to the rest of the seaway where tolls are charged, to charge as well the Welland canal against the seaway account, thereby giving a false impression of their accounts. The seaway did better last year than it did the year before, and we hope it will do still better this year. We hope it will get into balance in due course. Traffic is increasing steadily. I hardly dare hope for quite as big an increase this year as there was last year because we had this tremendous wheat traffic, but the prospects look very good.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Treatment services—

30d. Operation and maintenance, \$925,000.

Mr. Chatterton: Can the minister explain briefly the purpose of this amount of \$575,000?

Mr. McIlraith: It results from an underestimate in the rise in the cost of hospital care and an increase in the consumption of materials and supplies.

Mr. Chatterton: I had hoped to make quite a few comments on veterans affairs. However, when the Minister of Veterans Affairs ap-

peared before the standing committee last September he stated categorically, and I can quote the page, that he would introduce legislation dealing with the veterans charter before the end of last year. He said that on two occasions, and there were no qualifications. I hope the President of the Privy Council can assure us that legislation dealing with the veterans charter will be brought before the house early in the next session.

Mr. McIlraith: I cannot give an assurance for the minister but it is hoped that it will be done.

Mr. McIntosh: Those are the very words the minister used almost a year ago. He hoped he would bring it in this session.

Mr. Pickersgill: Let us end this session and give him a chance.

Mr. McIntosh: I am afraid we may have the end of another session and there will still be no veterans legislation.

An hon. Member: We will not reach that.

Mr. McIntosh: We will not reach the end of another session? Why not? If the voice of wisdom coming from the back benches is correct, I think it is high time we on this side had some assurance there would be some legislation introduced.

Mr. Pickersgill: Since I seem to be the senior minister here, I can say I know that is the intention of the Minister of Veterans Affairs. I know he has pressed his colleagues a great deal to get on with this. I think all of us know there has been quite a lot in this parliamentary timetable. We would like to start another session and try to get ahead with it.

Mr. McIntosh: I am quite prepared to sit down if the senior minister present will give us some assurance as to what type of legislation the Minister of Veterans Affairs intends to introduce.

Mr. Pickersgill: I think that it would be constitutionally improper, to attempt to anticipate the Queen's speech.

Mr. Churchill: If there is a change of government, I can assure the house there will be immediate action with regard to this legislation.

Mr. Patterson: I should like to take a moment to call attention to a situation that exists that could militate against veterans receiving the very best of care and attention. I refer to a situation that exists in Shaugh-