

Canadian Centennial

The second suggestion I should like to make is that the 1947 board of engineers' report on the Lachine section be reviewed in the light of present events. This was a report tabled in the house in 1948. It dealt with the development of the Lachine section. It was hoped at that time it would be possible to develop Lachine jointly for power and navigation purposes. When I was with the seaway authority I made several trips to the office of the premier of Quebec. I was, of course, always cordially received, but I was not successful in convincing the premier of Quebec that power should be developed jointly with navigation in the Lachine section. The engineers whom we consulted felt at the time that it would mean a saving of some \$25 million if this were done.

The suggestion I would make now is that while this report was prepared in part in co-operation with the Quebec Hydro Electric Power Commission it should be reviewed, and it seems to me that the minister or the government, should see whether something could not be salvaged from this report and whether it is not too late to develop power along with navigation on that section. Because if this were done I am sure there would be substantial savings not only to the province of Quebec but also to the federal government.

The third suggestion I have to make is that the St. Lawrence ship channel and Montreal harbour committee report of 1950 should be brought up to date. This, may I suggest to the house and to the minister particularly, is an extremely important report. The committee was set up in 1950 with four terms of reference. One dealt with the Saguenay river; another dealt with the general development of the ship channel at the time; still another with the improvement of the ship channel over a three or four year period; and a fourth term of reference had to do with the progressive development of the Montreal harbour after the completion of the seaway and power development in the Lachine section. The committee had, as its main purpose, to co-ordinate the work and responsibilities of the main groups in the area; the national harbours board, the Department of Transport, the Lachine canal and the St. Lawrence ship channel which is a division of the Department of Transport.

That committee submitted a general plan for a project to accomplish this co-ordination. It was fearful that low water levels in the port of Montreal might affect navigation in that port, and made certain recommendations.

The recommendation which it made is contained under "main features" of the conclusions dealing with Montreal harbour, and perhaps I may quote the main features of that plan.

The main features of the project are a dam with locks in the vicinity of Pointe aux Trembles and the maintenance of the low water level in the reach above the dam to an elevation approximately six feet above the extreme low water of 1934. The project will also entail the enlargement of the cross-sectional area of the river above the dam in order to reduce the cost of future harbour development on the south shore and to provide adequate depth for access both to this future development and to industrial areas that may be developed in that vicinity.

This report is dated 1950. It was prepared and made before the seaway construction had begun, and it was also made after the report of the board of engineers. I should like to draw the attention of the house to some of its features. The report is based upon the assumption that the power development in the Lachine section will be undertaken in one stage. It is also based on the assumption that the navigation channel would go into the La Prairie basin pool on the south side of the river at St. Catherine's bay, the area opposite Montreal, but would pass through the Victoria bridge at the north side of the river, with one lock immediately above the bridges and another slightly below the Victoria bridge. And, also, it was based on the assumption that the present Victoria bridge was to be abandoned for railway purposes and a new railway crossing constructed immediately above the present bridge and located partly on the dam and partly on the bridge structure.

To my mind this is perhaps the most important document dealing with the future development of the port of Montreal which has so far been published, and that is why I suggest that this report, which is still extremely important but which is somewhat out of date because of the fact that the ship channel is now on the south side of the river, should be brought up to date in the light of what has happened.

The fourth recommendation or suggestion is that the national harbours board should take immediate jurisdiction over the south shore area from the Indian lands at Caughnawaga to the present limits of the port of Montreal on both shores. As the minister knows, a great deal of land has been reclaimed by the seaway authority from above Jacques Cartier bridge to well below Longueuil. These areas are capable of industrial development and some industries are considering locating there at the present time.

Then there is the whole south shore from above Victoria bridge to the Indian lands of