

St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act

local resident, was the chief promoter and he made a speech at the sod turning ceremony in November 1823. It might be interesting to the committee to hear part of what he said at that time. Just previous to this time the Erie canal had been completed in New York state, and Mr. Merritt was referring to the Erie canal when he said:

If they can make a canal 300 miles long without taxation we can do the same for one tenth the distance by following similar means. When we contemplate the natural advantages we possess over the Americans in our water communications, it is astonishing to think of the apathy and indifference that have hitherto prevailed among us on this subject. If we inquire the cause nine tenths of us would blame the government. There never was a more erroneous idea. We are ever inclined to move the burden from our own shoulders and can only blame ourselves. Nor ought we to suppose that our governors are as immediately interested in any part or portion of the country as the inhabitants who are living on the spot.

Then I think the politicians in this committee will be interested in the next passage.

If you were asked from what branch of the legislature should these measures emanate, you would readily answer, the branch composed of the commons—they are sent from among us—their interest is ours and if we do not find exertion among them where do we look for it?

His idea of the legislature of that day was not very high even at that time, because he concludes with these words:

Show me a measure that has passed that body for the improvement of the country—it is a rare occurrence that measures of great national improvement originate from the administration of government.

So that is what he thought of legislatures at that particular time. He went on to say that when our legislators got to parliament they became indifferent. I am sorry to say that from reading the press and some of the letters in the Toronto daily *Star*, the Toronto *Telegram* and other papers, it seems we as members of parliament here are considered indifferent when in fact we are not. I pay tribute to the memory of Hon. William Hamilton Merritt who did so much to develop shipping in Canada.

There is a little history attached to tolls. Tolls were applied to the Welland canal right after it was constructed. I read an article to the effect that in 1895 tolls were being charged of 2½ cents per ton. In that particular year \$139,000 was collected and 870,000 tons passed through the canal. The minister mentioned today that the amount this year was 34 million tons.

Early in 1900, I think in 1903 or 1904, tolls were removed from the canal. At that time boats had to provide their own men, who accompanied the boats through the locks and looked after the tying up. They tied up the boats both at the locks and at the lock approaches.

[Mr. McMillan.]

This state of affairs continued until 1931, when on the completion of the present Welland canal the government of the day supplied linesmen to tie up the boats, charging a fee to the boats to pay these employees. When the St. Lawrence seaway took over we all know tolls were imposed to pay for the operation of the canal, plus the amortization of \$29 million, the cost of deepening the canal, which amount was to be retired over a period of 50 years. This continued until 1962, after the former government had taken over, but in June 1962 the tolls were removed.

I have often mentioned the question of tolls in this house. I have talked against their imposition, not so much because it would cost a great deal to industry and shipping passing through the Welland canal to retire the \$29 million plus the cost of operating the canal, but because this always created uncertainty in that area on the part of canal-based industries, as well as for industry in Hamilton and Toronto. There, industries were not worried so much about the \$29 million; they are more concerned about the \$180 million required now, which would make their position on the canal almost unbearable or intolerable. They would not be able to continue to operate in that location if they had to pay canal tolls commensurate with the cost of operating the canal, plus the amortization of some \$200 million over the next 50 years. This applies to industry in Hamilton and Toronto as well.

Let me take the steel industry in Hamilton as an example. The steel industry in Hamilton, like the steel plants in Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit and Lackawanna, gets its raw material for a lot of its steel from the shores of lake Superior, its coal and coke from the shores of lake Erie. In fact the coal mines of Pennsylvania are not far from lake Erie. All the material for United States mills comes in through toll-free areas, whereas every ton of raw material coming into the steel plants of Hamilton must pass through a toll area. This makes the steel mills at Hamilton less competitive with the steel mills along the United States shore of lake Erie. I have always maintained that this does make the steel and other industries in Hamilton and Toronto, which is supplied through the Welland canal, less competitive than some of the industries in the United States, and I therefore hope that when the question of tolls comes up the minister might be able to give the plants in our part of the country some favourable consideration. I might say that uncertainty will upset the stock market. It is just as upsetting to business, too. Certainly the canal area and certain other areas are not desirable