

*St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act*

has already been informed by my hon. friend that this increase in the estimates over the years has applied, not only to navigation on the Canadian side which is primarily a federal responsibility but it has applied in equal measure to hydroelectric developments which are the responsibility of the Ontario government. It has applied to action on the United States side both with regard to electricity and navigation, a responsibility of the United States government. Hence any increase in that sense in cost over estimate is a matter which has been brought about, not only in respect of these works which are the responsibility of this government and this parliament, but also of those which affect the Ontario government and the United States government.

My friend the hon. member for Carleton, who spoke a few moments ago talked particularly about the increase in cost of the Welland canal and drew far-reaching deductions about the supremacy of parliament and the flouting of parliament's rights because, he said, there was no opportunity to discuss this increase in earlier sessions. Perhaps he has forgotten that the increased estimates for the deepening of the Welland canal were tabled in this house. The figures are here. They were tabled. He had an opportunity last year to raise questions about this increase. It is not a question of responsibility of the government. He tried to turn the discussion to that point. The question we ask him was this. Why did he not rise last year when these figures were available? Why did he not rise the year previously, when the increased figures were tabled and were known, and say something in the House of Commons? Why did he not get indignant at that time at what he considers now to be gross extravagance and constitutional impropriety?

The hon. member for Stormont wants to know why the canal or the seaway is not on the Canadian side and who has responsibility for this being an international waterway and not a Canadian waterway. I can answer that question. It is a simple one. As the hon. member must know, as do other hon. members of the house, for years and years the Canadian government under both parties tried to bring about with the United States government an arrangement by which an international seaway could be constructed for power and for navigation. This attempt goes back over many years. In those earlier years it was a matter on which there was agreement in parliament between all parties as to the desirability of the construction of this great development, and there was also agreement that it should be done as an international activity or as an international construction. All the earlier negotiations over

the years with the United States were in order to try to persuade the United States to co-operate with regard to that development.

In those early days it was considered first that it would be unwise and extravagant—indeed that it would be almost impossible—to try to separate the power and the navigation features of that development. In those early days it was also considered that it was not within the economic and industrial capacity of this country to do the job alone. I am now talking about the situation 15 years, 20 years or 25 years ago. However, as all hon. members know, the United States was extremely reluctant to co-operate with regard to this international activity; and although agreements were reached and discussions were held, congress never reached the point of authorizing United States participation. Then because of the industrial and economic development of Canada the time came a few years ago, during world war II, when we in this country began to realize that we could do this job ourselves, that Canada was strong enough economically and industrially to do the job itself.

We let the United States know, while the previous government was in power, that as they had not seen fit to accept the invitation—and more than one had been extended—given to them to participate in this project as an international activity, we in Canada now desired to go ahead and make this a great Canadian seaway development. As soon as it was realized in Washington that this was not bluff but was a serious statement of Canadian government intention, the United States at once became intensely interested in the international aspect, and as hon. members know the United States government then decided to participate after they had been informed that we desired to go ahead alone.

Why did we take this matter up with the United States at all? Having come to the conclusion that Canada could bear the expense and was capable of constructing this seaway on the Canadian side for power and navigation, why did we not go ahead and do it without bothering to attempt to bring the United States in and without bothering to consult them at all? The answer to that question is surely quite obvious to anybody who knows anything about the facts and the law of the situation.

Any work constructed by the Canadian government which affects the level of, or affects in any way an international waterway, can be done only with the approval of the other country. That principle would apply if the United States were taking action which affected Canada, even if the activity undertaken were on the United States side.