

In brief, the plans now being laid are nothing more than the final stage of a development that has been going on for well over a century, with beneficial results for the peoples of both Canada and the United States. This final stage should be undertaken now simply because we have outgrown the facilities that are in existence. The present navigational channels are no longer able to support the demands that are now being placed upon them, and are still less adequate to meet growing demands to handle new traffic presently in sight.

As I see it, and as I think the great majority of Canadians see it, further development of the Great Lakes--St. Lawrence navigation system, far from being a visionary scheme, is a simple necessity. It is no longer something that would be nice to have, if it could be afforded. The St. Lawrence Seaway and all that goes with it in terms of added hydro-electric power and improved navigation has become something that we, the people of Canada, can no longer afford to do without.

Let me first describe the major works that make up the project.

The St. Lawrence Seaway project in its entirety includes the proposed deepening and improving of the channels now connecting the four Upper Great Lakes, bringing them up to the navigation standards of the present Welland Ship Canal which connects Lake Erie with Lake Ontario over the Niagara Escarpment. However, these channel improvements do not form part of the project presently contemplated by Canada. The 25-foot navigation presently available in the Upper Great Lakes is sufficient for Canada's present-day purposes.

The Welland Ship Canal was built by Canada on Canadian territory more than twenty years ago. It is operated without tolls and its operating expenses are paid for by Canada. It presently provides for 27-foot navigation, with provision for deepening to 30-foot navigation, as required. The navigation standards of the Welland Ship Canal are those projected for the seaway improvements now being contemplated. The improvements that make up the project that faces Canada today are largely confined to that strip of the St. Lawrence River between Prescott, Ontario, which is opposite Ogdensburg in New York State, and Montreal, Quebec, a distance of 114 miles, which constitutes the present bottleneck of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence water transportation route.

In this section, the great rapids in the St. Lawrence River offer at once an obstacle to navigation and an opportunity to harness power. Only the smaller part of that potential power is harnessed now, and the narrow canals that by-pass the rapids have small locks and a limiting depth of 14 feet. From Montreal harbour to the sea, there is at present a 32½-foot channel, which has made the harbour of Montreal one of the world's busiest ocean ports. This ship channel below Montreal is presently being deepened to 35 feet.

The channels in the St. Lawrence above Prescott are deeper than 27-foot now. The power development presently planned for the International Rapids section at or near Cornwall, Ontario, will provide 27-foot channels throughout the section, subject to minor improvements at its upper end.