

*The Budget—Mr. Brooks*

I listened to two hon. members discuss this subject, the hon. member for Westmorland (Mr. Murphy) from the government side and the hon. member for Saint John-Albert (Mr. Bell) from the official opposition, each of whom discussed the subject from a different angle. I feel there is not much difference of opinion in the province with respect to the development of hydroelectric power. I believe the hon. member for Saint John-Albert expressed very well the views of the people of New Brunswick when he said that such hydro development should be on the Saint John river.

I have been amused at times when listening to the hon. member for Westmorland discuss the question of the Chignecto canal. I was amused in particular when, at the first session the hon. member attended, after speaking about the Chignecto canal he said to me, "I hope you will back me up in this." Well, as the hon. member knows, there is a long history to the Chignecto canal, but I do not intend to go into that history this evening. I have done it before on a number of occasions.

However, if hon. members will permit I would go back to the year 1949 only to point out that at that time I had this matter very seriously in mind. At page 912 of *Hansard* for February 25, 1949, during the discussion of the St. Lawrence seaway, I had this to say:

This afternoon it is not necessary for me to weary the house with the history of the Chignecto canal. It is sufficient to say that by its construction over 400 miles will be eliminated from the water route of ships travelling from the St. Lawrence river to Saint John, Digby and other ports on the bay of Fundy.

As far as coastal service is concerned, it would help to shorten the distance for ships wishing to trade with Boston, New York, and ports of the New England states. The gypsum that we produce in the region of the bay of Fundy could be shipped through the Chignecto canal to the central part of Canada, and that industry would benefit greatly. The construction of the canal would benefit our lumbering industry, our fishing industry and practically every other industry in our province.

I quote that simply to show that in 1949, six years ago—four years before the hon. member came to the house—this matter was being very seriously discussed by members of the opposition. Then I went on to say, as reported at page 913:

I hope that, when the question of the St. Lawrence waterway is being discussed, members of the house will bear in mind that, as we will be called upon to help to pay for the development of the St. Lawrence waterway, we should be given some consideration as far as the development of the Chignecto canal is concerned, for it is something that was promised to the people of the maritime provinces many years ago.

I also went on to mention the possibility of hydroelectric power being developed through the building of the Chignecto canal.

But I was not the only one who was discussing the subject at that time. This afternoon the hon. member for Westmorland recommended that a commission be appointed to study the Chignecto canal. I might say that in 1930 a similar request was made. I would point out that in 1949, Mr. Black who represented the constituency of Cumberland for a number of years, recommended the appointment of a commission, but was turned down by Hon. Mr. Chevrier, the then minister of transport. At that time Mr. Black had this to say, as reported at page 2929 of *Hansard* for December 8, 1949:

I am going to take a few minutes to refer to canals, to the Chignecto canal. The building of this canal has been before this house ever since confederation. The hon. member for Royal has brought it up recently, as well as the hon. member for Queens and the hon. member for Gloucester. This session it was brought up by the hon. member for Saint John-Albert, the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough and other hon. members.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this is a matter which has been before the house on a great many occasions. But, as I said before, the development of the Chignecto canal at the present time is not the answer to our hydroelectric requirements in New Brunswick. Mind you, I feel the Chignecto canal should be, and I believe will be, built in time as a continuation of the St. Lawrence seaway.

Many hon. members have recommended measures for the solution of our problem. The hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Robichaud) mentioned the Albert shale; the hon. member for Kent, N.B. (Mr. Michaud) spoke about atomic energy. The hon. member for Westmorland spoke about the Chignecto canal; the hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Stuart) spoke about the Passamaquoddy project. These are all good, Mr. Speaker, but I do not think anyone in New Brunswick to-day believes that any of them is the answer to our immediate problem in that province. They may enter into the picture later on.

As far as the Chignecto canal is concerned, it is a matter for the federal government; it is not something the provincial government can undertake. My hon. friend was not here when a delegation came from the maritime provinces. It consisted of boards of trade and mayors of the cities of Saint John, Amherst, Moncton and Fredericton. It was a large delegation and consisted of some of the outstanding businessmen of the maritime provinces, such as Mr. Irving. They came up here and they were given the brush-off. The hon. member for Saint John-Albert spoke about a run-around. Well, these men were given the run-around; they were absolutely turned down. They were given the brush-off in 1949 so far as the Chignecto canal was concerned.