

*Seaway and Canal Tolls*

Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) appears at page 3086 of *Hansard*. It reads as follows:

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in response to a question a day or two ago, and as is required under the agreement with the United States, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority has been carrying on discussions with the St. Lawrence Corporation, the United States entity, with regard to a possible revision of the existing tolls. I understand that the parties to this discussion now feel they are fairly close to agreement as to what they will be prepared to recommend to the two governments.

That is quite an amazing admission on the part of the Minister of Transport. However, no agreed recommendations have been made. He then said:

If an agreed recommendation is made there will be public hearings in both countries before any final decision is made; and at those public hearings, of course, I expect that all considerations, including the ones referred to by the hon. gentleman, will be gone into.

What is taking place here is that these two authorities seem to have come to an agreement that an increase in tolls is to take place. They have also agreed that certain lock charges are to be imposed. This is a serious matter for Canada. The government of Canada should stand up and be counted in connection with the strong objection that is widely felt in this country against the imposition of any additional tolls. When we were in office we removed the tolls on the Welland canal in 1962. We did that because we felt that the steel industry and other industries would suffer greatly unless everything was done to reduce costs so that these industries might compete in export markets.

As one hon. member said today, this does not affect the United States very much but it does affect Canada. I am not going to go over the arguments that have been advanced but they were generally to the effect that there should be no increase. We in this House of Commons have the right to take the strongest possible objection to the cavalier attitude exhibited by the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority in having prejudged what action should be taken, that prejudgment having been clearly revealed in the words of one of its members when speaking in Winnipeg. Surely this is a case in which we in Canada should not be subject to the suggestion of domination by the United States.

I mention that because it is just one element in the case. One hon. member referred to the strong interests in the United States which were opposed to the St. Lawrence seaway and which have not changed. In the last few days we have had further evidence

of potential United States interference in Canadian business. I have before me the issue of the *Financial Post* of May 28. As you know, sir, it is always dated in advance. This is an article by Knowlton Nash headed "Canada Now A Prime U.S. Target In U.S. War On Dollar Drain". I mention it because I think the increase in these tolls is part and parcel of the ever increasing endeavour on the part of the authorities in Washington to control phases of economic development in Canada. The article reads as follows:

Canada seems to be developing into the No. 1 target in President Johnson's drive for U.S. balance of payment equilibrium.

• (5:00 p.m.)

We have had enough of these guide lines telling Canada how the laws of the United States should be applied to Canadian corporations, subsidiaries of United States firms. Proposed increase in the seaway tolls is just another element in this picture. I believe this problem is increasing because we have a government in office that believes in diplomatically failing to face the issue of Canada's survival as a nation economically strong and independent.

The article goes on to say:

United States companies operating in Canada are contributing the largest single-country share of improvements in the American balance of payments, and Canada has provided the largest return of United States short-term money from foreign nations.

This is the result of these guide lines. Then, we are told that a new message has gone out to Canadian subsidiaries of United States corporations as to what the United States would like them to do. In a letter to the presidents of the companies participating in a commerce department program, commerce secretary John Connor has outlined what he wants these companies to do in the future. These instructions, although not mandatory, are clear guide lines for United States owned companies in Canada.

This is interference in Canada's economic development. We have a government that sits idly by and refuses to stand up for this country. Ever since the month of February we have been asking for parliament to have the right to outline its views with regard the claim for additional tolls. If it had not been for the hon. member for Kindersley (Mr. Cantelon) we would have had no chance to deal with this matter. The attitude taken by the Minister of Transport was that he did not want to prejudge a thing until it was done.