Here then we see Canada promoting the St. Lawrence route in the face of U.S. competition, not to say opposition. But by the 1890's the opposition began to give way to some sympathy in the United States, as demands grew from the inland population of both countries for a cheaper connection with the outside world, without regard to the political border. Thus was ushered in a more harmonious attitude of joint U.S.-Canadian interest in the St. Lawrence, involving the concept of a deep waterway with uniform standards from the lakehead to Montreal.

The boundary line separating Canada and the United States follows the 45° latitude until it strikes the St. Lawrence River and from thence follows the middle of the stream until it strikes the foot of Lake Ontario. Because the long Sault Rapids are in international waters, it became necessary in dealing with them to seek the concurrence of both countries. Since 1895 Canada and the United States have co-operated in a series of investigations. They have covered both the engineering and economic aspects. No other project of comparable size had had the benefit of such careful scrutiny and such complete engineering data. Every report has favoured the development of deep draft navigation in the St. Lawrence River, and from an early date all have recommended a power development in the International Rapids Section as an integral part of the project.

Reports are one thing, action another. The last fifty-odd years have been marked by much talk but no new works in the St. Lawrence, and by less talk but continued development in the Upper Lakes. The result is to provide approximately 25 feet in downbound channels and 21 feet upbound from Duluth and Fort William to Prescott, whereas between Prescott and Montreal there are only the old 14-foot canals.

The continued improvements for navigation above Lake Erie came largely in response to the demands of the iron ore trade. Last year the five locks still in service at Sault Ste. Marie passed a total of some 130 million tons, over 100 million of it iron ore. These works opened a cheap water route to bring iron ore from the great deposits near Lake Superior to the coal of Pennsylvania and Ohio. They were thus the key on the one hand to the development of the Mesabi and other iron ranges, and on the other hand to the concentration of steel production around Lake Erie and at the head of Lake Michigan. Interestingly enough, the new works proposed for the St. Lawrence have a comparable significance for iron ore from Labrador and for an adequate supply of ores for the same steel mills.

What is the proposed Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway?

It is a 1200 mile channel 27 feet in depth extending from Montreal to the head of the Great Lakes. Since Montreal is 1000 miles from the sea, this would allow large lake and ocean vessels to sail over 2,200 miles of inland waterways to the heart of the continent.

Coupled with the waterway is the large-scale development of power at two sites at least, and possibly three. The first is the International Rapids Section of the St. Lawrence River, where it is proposed to develop 2,200,000 horsepower, divided equally between United States and Canada. The second is in the Soulanges Section, where