

When the Seaway is opened, we are going to see these lakers in the Lower St. Lawrence, and, therefore, we must be prepared not only to accommodate them in our harbour but also provide the grain-handling facilities needed to permit them to be unloaded rapidly and to reduce to a minimum their turn-around time. In this connection, I am happy to say that the National Harbours Board, which reports to Parliament through me as Minister of Transport, has embarked upon an extensive programme of improvements to the Port of Montreal to provide berthing accommodation for the lakers and to modernize our grain-handling facilities here. The Board is likewise undertaking expenditures for the same purposes at the Port of Quebec which at present cannot accommodate lakers.

The deepening of the waterway between Montreal and Prescott will also enable larger ocean-going vessels to operate into the Great Lakes. As early as 1933 European shipping interests had started with small vessels to develop traffic between ports in the Great Lakes and ports in western Europe. This was interrupted by the war, but was re-established in 1946 and has since increased substantially. In 1956 direct overseas traffic, upbound and downbound through the St. Lawrence canals, rose to 800,000 tons, compared to 690,000 tons in 1955. There were 14 lines engaged in this trade, operating 101 vessels, which made a total of 309 trips. When the Seaway is opened, we shall, I think, witness a further development of this traffic, but it seems to me that because of the very large population in those parts of the United States living in proximity to the Great Lakes, the bulk of the overseas traffic will be destined to or originate from United States ports on the Great Lakes, rather than Canadian ports.

So far as Montreal is concerned, I cannot help thinking that the Seaway will stimulate industrial development in our metropolitan area and particularly in those parts having direct access to the Seaway itself.

The prospect of this development, coupled with the building of the Seaway, has naturally focussed attention upon communications across the river. In this connection, I should tell you that the National Harbours Board has not only provided a fourth lane across the Jacques Cartier Bridge, but will provide entirely new approaches to the bridge on the south shore. It will consider adding a fifth traffic lane when conditions warrant doing so, but not before better approaches to the bridge are provided on the Montreal side.