

Chignecto Canal

seem to take our requirements in good heart. They do not seem to take them sympathetically; at least they do little about them. If there had been no confederation, if we had had to go on our own in the maritimes, I am just as satisfied as I am of standing here that this canal would have been built long ago. If it had been located in central Canada, it would have been built for certain. I make this appeal to the members of this house individually, and to the government, to take action.

There are in central Canada some men who should be given special credit. I refer to my friend Mr. John MacNicol. He went to Nova Scotia three years ago. He walked over the isthmus. In one case he walked over an old bridge that I did not think was sufficiently strong to hold his weight, but he wanted to see all that there was to be seen. He went across that bridge, and over every bit of that isthmus. I had the pleasure of having Mr. George Drew there as well. This is not a political matter; the people in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island are in favour of this, irrespective of politics. Soon after Mr. Drew became leader of our party he had occasion to visit Mount Allison university and I took him to the strait of Canso. I did not get any commitment from him but I did receive his sympathetic interest.

Again I make this appeal to all members of this house, irrespective of politics, to see that belated justice is done to the people of the maritime provinces and to see that this Chignecto canal that we have been expecting and promised for more than one hundred years should be built without further delay. If there is a possibility of electric power being generated it should be built at once so that we in the maritime provinces will get cheap power just as the people have it in central Canada, in order that industries could be built up and restored to us. I make this appeal so that these smaller industries that we had years ago, but which dried up, were bought out or moved away to central Canada, could be restored and so that we should again have industrial prosperity in the maritime provinces as they have elsewhere in Canada.

Mr. George C. Nowlan (Digby-Annapolis-Kings): The forceful words of the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Black), Mr. Speaker, with respect to this project leaves little that one can add on its behalf. But in view of the fact that it borders on my own constituency and that the waters of the basin of Minas are the waters which will finally flow through that canal if, as and when it is constructed, I think I would be recreant in

my duty if I did not support the appeal made by the hon. member for Cumberland.

As he has told you, this is an ancient question. The project of this canal has risen and fallen not quite as rapidly as the two tides but with amazing regularity throughout a century or more. Ancient projects such as narrow canals and other matters pass with the times. But we are now confronted with the possibility of a deep-water ship canal and associated with that canal is a power development. I agree with what the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker) said this afternoon, namely, that it is not the function nor the responsibility of members of parliament to urge the expenditures of money in their constituencies or in any one part of the country; they must be justified economically. As the hon. member has said, there is no doubt that the canal could be established easily. The soil and other factors are such that the work could be done at a minimum of cost. With these great developments of which we read with regard to iron resources in Labrador, and the great shipments of ore which are envisaged—and to which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) possibly looks forward as a means by which we can re-establish our foreign exchange with the United States—then the saving of hundreds of miles of ocean transportation would be of great value indeed. As to power, that is a matter of survey and of investigation. We in the maritime provinces need that power. What I am asking of the responsible ministers of the government is that they see that a proper survey be made and that a proper investigation be conducted, and conducted now or within the near future, to establish whether this power development is feasible or not. It is certainly not, I think, for any lay member here to advocate that expenditure. It is a matter of scientific investigation, as an engineering problem; and proper engineering surveys and investigation should be conducted and should be completed. If the project is justified, we want that expenditure. If it is not justified, we do not want it and we are not entitled to it.

As to the canal, it is open and shut; it is there and it can be developed at any time. But certainly we need the power. The industrial development of the maritime provinces is handicapped by circumstances to which we need not refer now. We need to develop cheap power and at the moment this is apparently the only project, save that to which the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) referred this afternoon, namely, the development of power from the pit mouth, whereby large quantities of power can be produced cheaply. I therefore urge **again**