

St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act

at Beauharnois was that they ran into unforeseen difficulties. Probably I had better give the story the way the minister explained the situation yesterday. As found at page 1163 of *Hansard*, the minister said:

On general grounds they contend that favourable consideration should be given because a creditable job was done, essentially in time, but that in order to do so unanticipated and increased costs were involved and severe losses incurred. The authority points out that to complete in time was a primary obligation under the contracts and that each individual claim—

And so on. The minister went on to say:

The authority is of the view that, in some cases, additional costs would have been avoided had the work been effectively and efficiently executed throughout the period.

As to the Beauharnois canal we were told by the gentleman directing the party that there was exceptionally hard, abrasive sandstone there. It was so hard that it wore out a drill every ten feet. It wore out the teeth in a day on the shovels that were excavating. Tires on the trucks that were operating there wore out in 100 hours which meant a cost of \$600 every 100 hours. All these things had delayed construction of that particular section, so much so that it could not be opened until this year and even now I understand it is not entirely complete. Where were the engineers of the department? Were contractors asked to figure and estimate without information on soundings or borings being provided by the department?

The same applies to what was said by the hon. member for Carleton. Everybody knows that the escarpment running from Hamilton all the way over to Niagara Falls, in which region the Welland canal is situated, is all limestone. Everybody knows that. The limestone has always been there. Limestone was encountered when the great hydro installations were made at Queenston and Niagara Falls. It was nothing new that there was limestone there, but nevertheless difficulties were encountered. Why were borings not made? Why was there not proper exploratory work to find out what the terrain was like. Where was this great engineer who was supposed to be the best man in the country? Where were the other departments? Surely there are geologists in the country who could have provided the information without trouble so that the contractors would have had an opportunity to do their work right. That is what was inefficient and it is the responsibility of the then minister and the department.

The former minister has tried to reflect glory on the previous government for what it did but the fact is that there is all this added expense which the people of Canada

[Mr. Small.]

are going to have to pay in the years ahead. If there were any justification for the added expense I would have nothing to say but the fact is that there was gross inefficiency somewhere in the department in not getting the necessary information. I have never heard tell of a contractor not being given full information as to what he was up against or being asked to get it himself. Therefore I think there has got to be a lot more explaining done.

I am not going to enter into the matter of the division of work between the United States and Canada. That was done under agreement. There has also been wonderful accord between the Department of Transport, the seaway authority and the Ontario hydro-electric. They have worked together very well and everything seems to be all right. We are going to get power that this country needs.

But now we have these figures presented to us and a request for an increase in the borrowing power of the authority. I will grant that there is a genuine reason for some of the many deficiencies, but now that the whole thing has been exposed we see that the builders of this wonderful seaway authority which was supposed to be doing such a good job did not get the required information that would have saved the country all this added expense. The ex-minister of transport and former chairman of the St. Lawrence seaway authority can talk all he likes and make all the explanations he likes but the culpability is on his shoulders because it was his responsibility to see that the engineers and other people in his department carried out their duties properly.

Probably the best thing that ever happened the country was the change of government because we can now bring to light the gross inefficiency that has been going on for years and about which we told the people before the election. Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I hope that the hon. member for Laurier will be given the opportunity of replying.

Mr. McIlraith: Oh no, he will be ruled out of order.

Mr. Small: The fact is that the committee was interested enough in the matter to give him permission to speak a second time. We want to try to get it cleared up so that this will not happen in the future. Be that as it may, Mr. Chairman, in what I have said I do not want to detract in any way, shape or form from the valuable work of the various officials, engineers and tradesmen who discharged the work efficiently. They had to go by the plans they were given. At times plans