

of more than 25 feet draught will be opened very shortly, in a matter of days. We are told also that the clearing of marginal obstacles and restoration of full navigational facilities has made much better progress than had been originally scheduled, in spite of political difficulties which have understandably attracted so much attention.

As the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) told the House last Monday, Canada has acquired a special interest in the steps being taken to reopen the Canal by virtue of the advance -- not the gift but the advance on good 'security' -- that the Government has made toward the financing of the United Nations clearing operations.

Canada, of course, is not a large user of the Canal but we are naturally anxious, as a trading nation, for the earliest possible resumption of the Suez traffic which is so vital to the economies of the many user states. Our participation in the advances made to the United Nations and the work that this interim financing has made possible was also of particular assistance to the United Kingdom and France at that time, and that was the main reason why we participated in that interim financing; and that is a reason which presumably should commend itself to hon. members opposite.

As hon. members know, certain proposals for provisional operating arrangements for the Canal pending the working out of a permanent regime have been agreed upon between the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, France and Norway and these proposals have been passed on to the Government of Egypt through the Secretary-General. They are to the effect that the International Bank or the United Nations itself should act as a neutral agent for receiving Canal tolls of which 50 per cent should be paid to Egypt immediately and the balance held pending determination of its disbursement under a definitive Suez settlement.

As far as I know, the Egyptian Government has not yet given its reply to these proposals but the Secretary-General is in touch with them on the matter and I have no doubt that is one of the questions he will be discussing on his visit to Cairo.

While Canada of course was not involved in the discussions which led up to the formulation of the proposals now before the Government of Egypt, I may say we consider that these proposals are sound and offer a reasonable basis for agreed arrangements under which regular Canal traffic might be resumed, and we hope that early agreement on such arrangements will be possible. The importance of that to us all is obvious. The arrangements that were agreed to last October at the Security Council provide for the free and non-discriminatory and secure transit through the Suez Canal for ships of all states, and in all states I include the State of Israel. We indicated our support for those arrangements in this House last summer.