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## BACKGROUND OF THE GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY AND POWER PROJECT

The present Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waterway is a basic factor in the economic life of North America. Extending some 2,350 miles from the heart of the continent to the Atlantic, it provides an important means of inland water transportation. More than half of the waterborne commerce of Canada and a quarter of that of the United States is carried on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. In addition, approximately a third of a potential 10,000,000 horse-power has been harnessed from the falls and rapids of the waterway.

Natural obstructions to navigation on the waterway have been overcome by the construction of canals and the dredging of channels. The present St. Lawrence canal system on the Canadian shore can pass ships of less than 14-foot draft. Since most of the waterway system forms the international boundary between Canada and the United States, the possibility of its development into an avenue of ocean-going shipping, of the further regulation of its waters, and of making use of a greater amount of its power potential have been matters of interest in both countries for some time.

Since 1895 the question of deepening the canals in the St. Lawrence has been the focus of considerable private and governmental interest in Canada and the United States. Supporters of the project have contended that it would substantially increase trade and economic development in the area of the Great Lakes; that a growing reciprocal commerce with the ocean ports of the world would result; and that the construction of the seaway would remove existing barriers and permit the full development of the potential water power that is now in such great demand.

The present 14-foot waterway is obsolete and experience has underlined the importance of taking advantage of the large carrying capacity of the specially-constructed "upper lakers", the economy of operation of these vessels having been demonstrated in the transportation of natural products of low intrinsic value which could not otherwise be moved.

If the calculations of those who support the construction of the seaway are correct, greatly increased economic development would follow the provision of cheaper transportation. At present the number of vessels that can proceed to the head of the Lakes is limited by the size of existing canals. Larger canals will permit the use of larger vessels with resultant decreases in transportation costs. Since World War II, exploration in northern Quebec and Labrador has confirmed the existence of extensive iron ore deposits. This development has become an important factor in considering the amount of traffic that would be available for the proposed seaway.

There has, indeed, been little argument between supporters and opponents of the seaway project regarding the potential reduction in transportation costs. The principal source of disagreement has been

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