

The beginning of the end of this saga of international co-operation and achievement began on Monday morning, at 4:00 a.m. to be exact, when all shipping was excluded from the Department of Transport canal system in the area to be flooded and during the day commercial traffic was all moved out. In fact the last ship to be moved through the canals was the "Tecumseh" - an historic name appropriate for an historic occasion - with iron ore from Contrecoeur, Que. to Buffalo, N.Y., a happy augury of the traffic which will be moving through the new Seaway canals in increasing volume in the coming years.

Immediately, Department of Transport crews, some one hundred strong, drawn from the principal canals worked around the clock demolishing the old canal system. All machinery and electrical installations were removed, lock gates were unhinged and attached to floating markers, and buildings razed by fire, explosive or by demolition chain.

With the demolition of the coffer dam between Sheek and Barnhart Islands, the flooding began of the area to provide a head water for hydro power development. This has brought to a successful conclusion most of the construction work jointly carried out by the Ontario Hydro Commission and the New York State Power Commission.

Following the flooding, the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation of the United States, the counterpart of the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, officially opened the newly constructed Seaway locks on the United States side of the International section of the river on Wednesday with appropriate ceremony. These are the Dwight D. Eisenhower Locks and the Bertrand H. Snell Locks.

Today, shipping was due to start operating again but instead of the old canals they will be using the new Seaway Locks at Iroquois, Eisenhower and Snell in the International Section of the Seaway. While large lakers are now able to come down all the way to Cornwall, the section of the Seaway between Cornwall and Montreal has still to be completed before through shipping of vessels drawing 27 feet of water is finally possible.

I have briefly outlined the historic stages marking the completion of the greater part of the St. Lawrence Seaway and power project. It is now possible for hydro power to go into operation and also for the Seaway to advance one stage further in its progress to sea.