

*Seaway and Canal Tolls*

installation in 1958, that we are bound by certain precedents.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** May I ask the hon. gentleman one more question? In view of the fact that the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) is completely removed from politics and comes from an area which has the greatest ship traffic in all the world, does the minister think he could soften his heart in this regard and assure that there will be no increase in tolls?

**Mr. Turner:** In answer to that, Mr. Speaker, I can only say that the legislation and energies of this government have made Windsor one of the most prosperous and important commercial centres in the country, and I am sure the people there are very happy with the way they are represented by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do I understand that the hon. member for Rosthern wishes to ask a question?

**Mr. Nasserden:** No, I wish to speak.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Halifax.

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, the senior member for Halifax (Mr. McCleave), who spoke earlier, I should like to say at once that my views are those of moderation. We understand the problem that has been raised this afternoon by the hon. member for Kindersley (Mr. Cantelon). We understand the ramifications, direct effects and implications of an increase in the tolls on the St. Lawrence seaway. We understand them from the point of view of maritimers, of people who have the honour to represent one of the great ports of the world.

As suggested earlier by the senior member for Halifax, the whole matter before us is simply symptomatic of the lack of clearly defined national transportation policies. We find this lack with regard to our rail facilities. There is no need for me to underline the absence of a regional air policy. Now we are getting down to the point where we have no agreement on our seaway policy. We have conflict. We have positions set up that are at once at odds and in conflict with regional interests.

Being from Halifax I must say that it might be pleasant to have a substantial increase in the tolls on the seaway. This would have the happy and beneficial effect of diverting substantial tonnage to Halifax which we in turn could transship by rail and truck

[Mr. Turner.]

to the rest of Canada, particularly to those areas that lie west of the St. Lawrence seaway system.

It would be very easy to stand up and support the declared intention of the seaway authority but, in response to a sense of fairness to all Canada and to those who must use the seaway, suffice it to say that I trust the government will act in a manner that is going to be most beneficial to all Canadians and at the same time will not in any way further retard our position in Halifax as a national port. I think the same can be said for Saint John because their problems are identical with ours.

The present difficulty appears to be the traditional one of any business that gets itself into trouble by owing more money than incoming revenues will meet.

In the "Notes to Financial Statements" contained in the St. Lawrence Seaway Annual Report for 1964, paragraph 4 on page 14 states:

In accordance with the provisions of order in council PC 1964-2036 of December 23, 1964, the principal amount of interest-bearing loans received under section 25 of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act to finance construction of the seaway, together with interest previously deferred and all other interest now accrued or accruing up to December 31, 1966, is to be repaid, together with current interest thereon, in 43 equal annual instalments commencing December 31, 1967.

The suggestion has already been alluded to by the acting minister that perhaps consideration should be given to forgetting about the capital cost of the seaway. He referred to the effects that this would have, and quite rightly so. There would be immediate and substantial effects, some of them not very enjoyable to those upon whom they would react.

The minister also referred to section 16. In the context of section 16 it is my thought that no matter how much lip service we pay to the capital debt of the seaway I very much doubt that it will ever be retired. Having this in the back of our minds perhaps one solution to the problem might be for the government to look again at section 16 of chapter 242 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, 1952. Section 16(b) reads as follows:

Amounts sufficient to amortize the principal of amounts so borrowed over a period not exceeding 50 years.

If I am in business and I buy a piece of equipment it might be useful to write off that piece of equipment quickly if I have made a lot of money. But I am in the air transportation business and would prefer to write