

St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act

In fact, people all the way from Montreal to Toronto, at least from Montreal to Kingston, want to know the answer. Who was responsible for the seaway being on the United States side? I believe there is only one man who is capable of giving that answer.

For 50 years the people in the area along the St. Lawrence, the oldest settled part of Canada west of Quebec had dreamed and hoped for the St. Lawrence seaway which would bring a new era of prosperity to that area. By fortuitous circumstance, when the time became propitious for the construction of the seaway Cornwall's most illustrious son happened to be in a position where he could do the most for his own area. At that particular time this native son of Cornwall, who had reached heights of distinction that put him in a position where he was largely instrumental for the carrying on of the international negotiations prior to the construction of the seaway, was in a position to influence the course of events. I would be most reluctant to say anything derogatory about this hon. gentleman.

Mr. Pearson: You are doing so now.

Mr. Campbell (Stormont): He is a most able and charming man, a man of consummate charm, and I have been exposed to both his charm and ability. In fact, I owe a great deal to him. I owe my presence here today to him. I must acknowledge a great debt to the Prime Minister who, prior to occupying that office, came to our area. I must also acknowledge a great debt to a small group of devoted workers in the last two elections.

The Deputy Chairman: Order. I must ask the hon. member to come back to the resolution.

Mr. Campbell (Stormont): But the greatest debt I owe to anyone so far as being elected is concerned is the debt I owe to the hon. member for Laurier, my predecessor, because of the disillusionment of the people in that area over the fact that they lost the canal to the United States side when he, more than anyone else, was in a position to see that Cornwall and Canada derived the maximum benefit from the construction of the seaway. As I said before, I would be reluctant to bring up this matter were it not for the fact that time and again I have been charged by people of the area with being delinquent in my duty in not bringing this matter before the house and getting some sort of satisfactory answer to the question, why is the seaway on the United States side, why are the locks not in the Cornwall area?

I do not wish to go into detail with regard to the stupendous, almost fantastic, increase

[Mr. Campbell (Stormont).]

of over 60 per cent from the cost originally estimated to the actual cost. That matter has been dealt with only too adequately by the previous speaker. But one thing that is of great concern to us is the fact that because of this tremendous increase the whole success of the seaway system may be jeopardized. Originally the project was predicated on the assumption that it would be self-liquidating over a period of 50 years but now in order to pay for the increased cost it seems likely that even if the amortization period were extended to 75 years or 100 years the seaway tolls would have to be raised to such a level as to be prohibitive.

This, of course, is of vital importance to our whole area. It would appear that there are only two ways in which to rectify the situation as far as our area is concerned. There are only two ways in which Cornwall can be restored to its former position on the great St. Lawrence waterway or so that it may benefit by it. First, of course, would be the construction of an all-Canadian seaway. The only alternative in order, to restore traffic to our area would be the construction of harbour facilities either to the east or to the west of the present city so that then we could have access once more to the shipping lanes. I have nothing further to say at this time except this. Our people want to know why the man who was in a position to do the most for that area did not do so and why the canals are at present located on the United States side rather than where the Cornwall canal had been for over 100 years, in the Canadian channel.

Mr. Pearson: I had not intended to take part in this discussion this afternoon, Mr. Chairman, until I heard the remarks of the hon. member who has just taken his seat. He addressed some questions to my friend the hon. member for Laurier which effected what he calls the assassination of a city and he wants to know why that took place. As the hon. member for Laurier has already spoken—indeed the committee was very courteous in giving him ample time in which to speak—perhaps I should take advantage of the first opportunity to try to answer the serious question asked by the hon. member.

Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert): We are in committee. The hon. member can speak for himself.

Mr. Pearson: Anyway, I am talking now. If my friend the hon. member for Laurier gets the floor later he can also speak on the matter. But whether we are in committee or not, I am talking now.

As to the other aspect of the discussion, namely the increased cost, the committee