

St. Lawrence Waterway System

charges. If cameras can be marketed at common retail prices in all parts of the country, automobiles also ought to be so marketed. Such marketing policy would help greatly our people in the far flung parts of the country. The cost would not amount to much and could be charged to those in central Canada.

I do not think anyone in the Atlantic provinces regrets the building of the St. Lawrence seaway complex of transportation, and recognizes it as a forward step to open up all the country. Without doubt it has been of great benefit to all parts of Canada, and it has been of some help to the Atlantic region. However, we in the Atlantic provinces have always been afraid of unemployment, and of losing during the winter months part of our transport business. Whether modern technology can open the seaway without additional cost to the country, I do not know. I doubt it. If that can be done, the costs involved should be borne by the carriers themselves. If they wish to pay the additional cost of breaking through the St. Lawrence ice, rather than tying up at a deep sea port and paying for the additional rail freight, that would be all right with us. We have developed the maxim that we live and that we will let the rest of the country live; and we expect the rest of the country to feel that way about us. We do not wish to impede general progress. When the rivers are closed for navigation any ships that wish to run the risk of entering closed waters should be prepared to pay for the costs of any assistance they might request if they become trapped during the winter. Even where flood control programs are inaugurated, with resultant benefits to ships, the ships using the waters in question should be obligated to pay toward the program, where it is felt that it is more beneficial to bring cargoes toward central Canada than to unload them at a deep sea port.

I do not come from a deep sea port city, but I know something of the railway system which serves such ports. The economy of our area has a great lift in the winter when heavy goods move from central Canada to our ports. Of course the stockpiling at those ports all the year round of goods to be shipped by sea also is good for us.

I will not labour my remarks. This notice of motion has merit. The economic structure of the seaway development should be carefully reviewed; we must make certain that it is amortized in such a way that those who use it will pay for it. It must not become a burden on the whole country. It must not be a charge on those who, through further development of

[Mr. Kennedy.]

the seaway, would be deprived of their traditional rights to employment and a decent livelihood.

• (6:50 p.m.)

Like the hon. member for Saint John-Albert (Mr. Bell), I commend this notice of motion to the house and hope that someone on the government side in the few minutes remaining to us will rise and accept our suggestion that this matter be placed before a committee, where experts can be called and all reasonable people could give their views and discuss the matter in the way in which maritimers discuss all their problems.

Mr. D. R. Tolmie (Welland): Mr. Speaker, as the member representing the Welland riding, and as one residing in Welland on the Welland canal, which is part of the seaway, I am naturally keenly interested in this motion.

I have a certain special knowledge concerning the St. Lawrence seaway authority. Let me say first that I am opposed to the idea that a parliamentary committee be formed to investigate the seaway authority, its policies and its operations. I am very much opposed to this for various reasons. In principle, I believe it would be wrong to do so; we would be setting a highly dangerous precedent if we were to set up special committees to investigate and probe into properly constituted independent bodies set up by the government so as to be free from political influence and able to conduct the nation's business with complete objectivity, divorced from both the direct and the indirect pressures of partisan politics.

This does not mean of course that the seaway authority, or any crown corporation, is a law unto itself, responsible to no higher authority. However, there are built in safeguards against irresponsible behaviour. The government knows full well that the courses of action followed by any such agencies will reflect on the image and reputation of the government itself. In consequence, any government is going to take exceptional care to ensure that those appointed to these boards are people of the highest calibre in terms of ability, integrity and common sense.

It must be remembered, too, that public opinion is still a strong factor in this country. It is very salutary for public bodies to realize that their actions are not beyond reproach, and that they are still answerable to the most powerful authority of all—an aroused, articulate and critical chorus of well directed public