

The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Seaway should be distinguished from the St. Lawrence Ship Channel, which is a channel extending from Montreal easterly to a point 30 miles below Quebec. This channel was deepened by the Federal Government for the purpose of providing safe navigation for ocean-going vessels from deep water to Montreal. It has a depth of 35 feet at extreme low water and it will provide a link with the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Seaway when the latter is completed.

The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Seaway is but a small part of what is known as the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Basin. This is a vast drainage system covering an area of 678,000 square miles, 493,000 of which are in Canada and 185,000 in the United States. It includes Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, together with all the tributary rivers and streams, the most important of which are the St. Lawrence River, the Ottawa River, the St. Maurice River and the Saguenay River. The height of land in Canada at the northern limit of this drainage area averages about 1,800 feet above sea level.

You will therefore immediately appreciate the economic significance of this vast drainage basin comprising a potential waterway, together with a potential reservoir of white power in an area of Canada where no coal or black power is available.

The Seaway may be described as consisting of five steps. These five steps are liabilities as far as navigation is concerned, in that facilities must be provided to enable vessels to pass them. But they are also great assets, in that they offer more than 11,000,000 horsepower of electrical energy for the harnessing. The five steps are:

1. The St. Mary's River between Lakes Superior and Huron, a drop of 21 feet;
2. The St. Clair-Detroit passage joining Lakes Huron and Erie, a drop of 8 feet;
3. The Niagara River from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, a tremendous drop of 326 feet;
4. The Upper St. Lawrence River from Lake Ontario to Montreal another great drop of 225 feet;
5. Montreal to the sea, a drop of 20 feet.

Now then, what is the present position of the Seaway?

As the navigation system is presently constituted, here is how the Seaway stands today:-

1. From the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to Montreal a distance of 1,000 miles, controlling navigation channels are 35 feet in depth.
2. From Montreal to Lake Ontario, a distance of 180 miles, controlling navigation channels are 14 feet;