

PROBLEMS OF REHABILITATION OF WATERFRONT
COMMUNITIES TO BE AFFECTED BY THE ST. LAWRENCE
DEVELOPMENT

An address by the Minister of Transport, Mr. Lionel Chevrier, delivered to the Mille Roches Chamber of Commerce, at Moulinette, Ontario, March 2, 1953.

I. The History

- (1) 1932 Treaty of Washington;
the two-stage development scheme;
its defeat in the U.S. Senate.
- (2) 1941 Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Agreement;
the one-stage development;
under this agreement the Federal Government
was to construct all the works both power and
navigation.
- (3) The all-Canadian proposal.
- (4) The St. Laurent-Truman conversations, September 1951.
- (5) Legislation:- the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority;
the agreement with Ontario for the development of
power.
- (6) Joint application, Canada and United States, to the
International Joint Commission.
- (7) The exchange of notes by which Canada undertakes to
build the canal on its side of the line.
- (8) The hearings of the International Joint Commission.
- (9) The Order of Approval of the I.J.C., October 1952.
- (10) The removal of the Gut Dam.
- (11) The application of the New York State Power Authority
before the Federal Power Commission.

--Two things remain undone:- (1) granting of the licence,
(2) the naming of the entity. When these two things
have been done by the Americans, the project will
proceed forthwith.

II. The Works

The project approved of by the Order of the International
Joint Commission is the 238-242 controlled single stage project.
Its main features are as follows:-

- (1) A control dam in the vicinity of Iroquois Point.

- (2) A dam in the Long Sault Rapids at the head of Barnhart Island and two power houses, one on either side of the international boundary at the foot of Barnhart Island.
- (3) A side canal with one lock to carry navigation around the control dam at Iroquois and a side canal with two locks to carry navigation from Cornwall to the pool above the Long Sault dam.
- (4) Dykes where necessary on both sides of the border to retain the pool level above the Long Sault dam.
- (5) Excavation and dredging so that all navigation channels will have a depth of 27 feet.
- (6) The necessary railroad and highway modifications on either side of the international boundary.

III. The Effect

The effect of these works will be to create a huge lake extending from Prescott to Cornwall. The area appreciably affected by the work has a length of 32 miles by a width of from one to four miles. When it is realized that the average elevation along Highway No. 2 is 220, it will be seen that once the project has been completed everything within this area will be inundated to the extent of anywhere from 18 to 22 feet. Schools, churches, cemeteries, historic sites, communities will disappear.

The municipalities seriously affected by flooding are six in number:-

(a) In the County of Stormont

(1) Township of Osnabruck

(2) Township of Cornwall

(b) In the County of Dundas

(1) Township of Matilda

(2) Village of Iroquois

(3) Township of Williamsburg

(4) Village of Morrisburg

It is estimated that construction can be carried out in four to five years. It can be assumed that no flooding of the foreshore will occur until spring comes around approximately three years from the time of beginning construction. At that time flooding will be instantaneous. It is possible to raise the water in two stages. It is proposed to acquire all lands below elevation 248.

IV. The Problem

The problem is three-fold:

- (a) to preserve the scenic beauty of the area;
- (b) to rehabilitate the communities affected;

(c) to compensate the individual property owner.

(a) The Preservation of Scenic Beauty

The proposed development in the International Rapids section will flood one of the most beautiful sections of the St. Lawrence. It will bring an end to the Long Sault Rapids and it will do away with one of the loveliest drives extending along the north shore of the River St. Lawrence that can be seen anywhere in Canada. Care must be taken that the power development will not merely bring an end to the beauty of the rapids involved, but that it will not bring into being an eyesore comparable to those which so many times result from such works. Hence it is necessary to give consideration to the need for the preservation of the scenic beauty of the whole St. Lawrence area in considering this section.

Perhaps the best and worst examples of what can be done in a power development are to be found in the vicinity of Ottawa. The Chaudiere Falls are made hideous by an inconsiderate and unplanned development without regard for the need of the preservation of the beauty of the Capital. On the other hand, the Gatineau is an example where the scenic beauty of the river was preserved. There the Company was interested in the development of cottage sites, and by planning and foresight was able to ensure the development of Chelsea Lake without its being spoiled by dead trees, ruined houses and other eyesores.

In the case of the St. Lawrence, there is need for foresight and planning with a view to ensuring that the new lake which will extend from Cornwall to Cardinal may be developed with new scenic values that will compensate for those destroyed.

Here I would point out that, in the Agreement signed on December 3, 1951, between the federal and Ontario governments concerning the St. Lawrence development, Article XV reads as follows:-

Ontario will establish a Commission to supervise the execution of such works as may be appropriate, consistently with the execution of the works, to safeguard and enhance the scenic beauty of and historic associations with the International Rapids Section.

Consideration should also be given to the preservation of the historic monuments and the historic associations of the area that will disappear forever. To this section of Ontario are related some of the most historic episodes in the history of Canada -- the exploration of the west and the Indian wars of the French regime, the coming of the United Empire Loyalists, the War of 1812, and later the development of the Canadian canal system of which the proposed work is but the final stage.

The dominant feature of the river-front of Osnaburck and Cornwall Townships under their new conditions will be a string of islands far out in the new lake which will stretch for six miles from just east of the present Farran's Point almost to Moulinette. These islands will be of various sizes. Some will almost disappear at extreme high water stage, while some will stand 10 to 30 feet above high water level. Consideration might well be given to the construction of a road from the new Queen's Highway to these islands, linking them together by causeways. This would be an ideal spot for a park. A road might well be constructed joining the islands together and to the

mainland at either end. The channels to be bridged would not be more than 4 or 5 in number and would be comparatively shallow. These islands are partially wooded now. In the course of 3 or 4 years they should become very desirable sites for summer cottages.

Between Morrisburg and Cornwall there are some 13 cemeteries that will be inundated. Two of these are west of Morrisburg. It is in these graveyards probably more than in any other spots that the historic associations of this area are enshrined. Where to transfer the graves and tombstones of those pioneers and others buried in these cemeteries that will be inundated would be another matter to be determined. Whether this should be done in a central spot or in local cemeteries as close as may be to, and as nearly as possible like, the original location are matters for each community to give consideration to. It might well be that if a single memorial cemetery were decided upon it could be established on the most northerly of the Long Sault islands. This will be the finest island of the group, attaining elevation 290, or about 45 feet above ultimate high water level. As a site for a memorial cemetery it would be a beautiful spot, safe from the inroads of commercialism for all time.

One other historic spot should be preserved -- the Battlefield of Crysler's Farm. It will be five feet under water. Consideration might well be given to the establishment of a small island at the spot where the monument now stands. It would be close to the new highway and yet a safe distance away from the main navigational channel. The preservation of this epic incident in Canadian history warrants careful consideration of this suggestion.

There are, no doubt, other historic sites in the area the preservation of which by removal to new sites or by raising their existing sites must be considered individually.

(b) The Rehabilitation of the Community

The first point to be considered here is that the communities so severely affected must be restored to the greatest extent possible with their present assets which are accessibility to the river, good highway facilities, and natural scenic attractiveness. These assets are what have made them pleasant places in which to live, both all year round or during the summer season. From the last they draw a considerable measure of prosperity.

The first question that arises here is the following: Does the community want to be rehabilitated on the new shore line? How many of its citizens want to take their compensation money and leave the community altogether? How many want the identity of the community preserved? This is a matter which should be ascertained without too much delay, and I can think of no better body than yours to do this. If a majority of the citizens of your community, or two-thirds, wish to move to the new shore line, this brings up interesting questions of town planning, location of industry, railways, highways and communications. Consideration must be given to the relocation and establishment of new schools where they would be required. The advantages or disadvantages of consolidated schools -- the questions of providing transportation to bring the children to school rather than local school sections -- would be a matter to be worked out with the assistance of the Department of Education.

The relocation of church buildings where congregations have been dispersed will in most cases require very sympathetic consideration, particularly with regard to independent congregations whose membership may scatter widely.

In other words, there must be prolonged negotiation between the people of Mille Roches and other communities affected with the body or bodies responsible for these matters in order to ensure orderly action. These negotiations might have as their objective the establishment of a new town on a new town-site. This would be required to be laid out on a modern basis with all modern conveniences. I do not see why it would not be possible to develop industrial sites all along the bank of the new shore line with a railway spur line joining the main line.

Mille Roches particularly will be in an advantageous position because 30-foot navigation is readily obtainable on the new shore line north of here.

In developing a plan for this area, complete co-ordination as among equals will have to be maintained between the Ontario Hydro, Canadian National Railway, the Ontario Department of Highways and the municipalities involved with respect to the position of stations, bridges, grade separated crossings, clover-leaves, docks, airfields, etc., so that the economics of the local communities will not be lost sight of in deciding matters of relative internal economy to the national transportation systems.

(c) Compensation to the Individual Property Owner

To the individual this is by far the most important feature. He will want to know what he is entitled to. I am not an expert on this and can only give you the benefit of my experience arising out of the expropriation which takes place under the Department of Transport.

As a general rule the measure of compensation in cases of land expropriated for a public work is the value of the land to an owner in its actual condition at the time of the taking, with its existing advantages and the existing value of its prospective potentialities, but excluding any advantage due to the execution of the public work.

The principles of compensation in expropriation cases were reviewed in the case of Woods Manufacturing Company, Limited, versus The King, 1951, 2 D.L.R., page 465. This is a judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada. The case dealt with the expropriation of the property of the Woods Manufacturing Company situated in the City of Hull. This was a business property but the general principles to be applied in assessing compensation to the owner for property expropriated by the Crown were outlined by the Chief Justice.

In estimating the fair value of land expropriated the Court must estimate the price which the land will fetch if offered for sale in an imaginary market. That price is the amount which a prudent man in the position of the owners would be willing to pay for the land sooner than fail to obtain it.

"It does not follow, of course, that the owner whose land is compulsorily taken is entitled only to compensation measured by the scale of the selling price of the land in the open market. He is entitled to that in any event, but in his hands the land may be capable of being used for the purpose of

some profitable business which he is carrying on or desires to carry on upon it and in such circumstances it may well be that the selling price of the land in the open market would be no adequate compensation to him for the loss of the opportunity to carry on that business there." In such a case here is the formula suggested: that the owner is entitled to that which a prudent person in his position would be willing to give for the land sooner than fail to obtain it.

In the Woods case referred to above the Supreme Court gave approval to the granting of an allowance for compulsory taking to be added to the value of the land and buildings expropriated. The allowance was fixed at 10% but it does not appear to be a matter of right. It is considered as a factor in the compensation and is awarded in proper cases.

V. What is Being Done towards a Solution

- (1) At the request of the Government of the Province of Ontario the Hydro Commission has established an advisory committee with representatives of the various departments of government concerned with the work -- Planning and Development, Highways, Agriculture, Education, Lands and Forests, and Municipal Affairs. This was announced by the Honourable Mr. Challies in his address in Cornwall to the Council Meeting of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry on January 20th.
- (2) An expert in community planning and a representative of the Canadian National Railways have been included on the committee.
- (3) Mr. H.D. Rothwell, of the Ontario Hydro, has been appointed liaison engineer on the project, and the advisory committee reports to him. His responsibilities include rehabilitation, community planning, historic sites, scenic beauty.
- (4) An aerial survey has been completed by Ontario Hydro of the Ontario shore to a depth of six miles from Prescott to Mille Roches. Maps with the scale of 1,000 feet to the inch are being prepared and they will prove valuable in discussions between the Province, municipalities and individual property owners.
- (5) Soon the Hydro Commission will call a conference of the municipalities to be affected by the St. Lawrence development.
- (6) It is the intention of the Provincial Government and the Commission that the whole area involved in the St. Lawrence development will be restored with improved municipal services achieved through close and friendly co-operation between provincial and municipal agencies.

VI. Conclusion

I want to make it quite clear that anything I have said this evening is not submitted as a solution of the three problems of rehabilitation which will arise in connection with the project. It has been submitted simply to draw attention

to the magnitude of the problem. There is no doubt but that the three problems mentioned are the ones which have to be solved. All I can say is that Ontario Hydro is studying the problem carefully and they should be given every opportunity to deal with it. After all, the green light has not yet been given from Washington and it is somewhat early to present a clear-cut solution at this time.

Whether or not the advisory committee established is sufficient to deal with this three-fold problem I am not prepared to say. It may be that this body can deal with the whole problem.

But in any event there are two things clear in my mind: first, Hydro will provide practical assistance in the laying out of townsites and the re-establishment of communities; second, it is not enough for the communities to make their wishes known to Hydro. They must expect to take a considerable share of the initiative in working out a solution for themselves.

I commend the citizens of Mille Roches for having established themselves in an association to deal with this problem. I recommend that the other communities along the river-front do likewise. It will be in their own interest both individually and collectively so to do.



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