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INTERNATIONAL POWER PROJECT ON ST. LAWRENCE UNDERWAY
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FIRST VISUAL REPORT ON WORK PROGRESS ON ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY
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ONTARIO HYDRO BATTLES FREEZING WEATHER AT DAM SITE IN
INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF ST. LAWRENCE
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St. Lawrence River, Cornwall, Ontario, January 12, 1955.

Men and machines are finally battling the most famous river in Canada to turn her enormous energy into millions of horsepower. The famous Long Sault Rapids, noted tourist attraction above Cornwall, Ontario, will soon be a memory, a coffer dam will end their existence.

After years of negotiations, the St. Lawrence Seaway and power project is being realized. At Cornwall, site of the proposed twin American and Canadian powerhouses, work is well underway on the down stream coffer dam which will hold back the river and allow the area to be pumped dry in order to build the powerhouses, each capable of developing over 1,000,000 horsepower. Three miles upriver at Sheek Island, the upstream section of the coffer dam is already in. The difficult and treacherous work at the Cornwall section connecting the Ontario shore on the Canadian side with Barnhart Island on the American side is now well underway. The completion of the power project at this sight will take approximately five years and will flood communities on both sides of the River. The river level will be raised approximately 20 feet for a distance of some 30 miles from Cornwall to Iroquois, Ontario, creating a huge lake which will drown out the famous Long Sault Rapids, many islands and many small towns along the Canadian shore. Over the period of the next five years, these communities will be relocated on higher ground.

At the river construction site, huge templates 64½' in diameter are put in place to form a coffer dam. It is treacherous work. The river flows about 7 miles an hour and the strong flow and the freezing cold is hampering the driving of the immense ribbons of steel used to form the dam around the templates.

96 feet

The templates are constructed over the water and floated into position with help of barges with crews of men on shore paying out ropes to hold the steel and wood structure from floating too far out of line. Engineers set the position exactly and steel workers fasten the template into position. Barges of steel piling are tugged into position near the operation.

The freezing weather has coated the steel with layers of ice. This must be removed before the interlocking panels can be threaded. Jets of steam play on the 55' long ribbons of steel and massive cranes swing the one-ton sections into position. A steel worker on a precarious perch on top of the last section installed guides and threads the panels into place and the crane allows the sections to slide to the river bottom. At this part of the river the water is 20' deep, further out near Barnhart Island it is approximately 30' deep. The steel is driven 10' into the river bottom by a steam driven pile driver. Each completely steel circled template is called a cell. It will take 60 cells to finish the Canadian side of the dam to Barnhart Island. Work has already commenced on the Island side to meet the work on the Canadian side in midstream. This whole operation is being handled with Canadian workmen.

Work on this coffer dam is not expected to be completed until next spring. Next summer will see the pumping dry of the three mile section of the river and the construction started on the twin International power houses.

The seaway and power project will bring incalculable benefits to the United States and Canada, who will share equally in the tremendous cost. Within five years the power dams will make available millions of horsepower to spark new industrial developments in the two countries. The seaway, open to deep-draft ocean-going vessels will mean cheaper transportation to the heart of the continent bringing world trade to the industrial Great Lakes ports and sending the produce of the two nations directly to the consumer markets of the world.