

Improvement of the Saint Lawrence.

Upper Canada, and we might submit the subject to that body, with the firm conviction that it would promptly act upon it. But in the performance of the duty assigned us, many interesting facts connected with the trade of the country, have been elicited, and we take leave to mention the following:

The quantity of produce sent to Lower Canada by the Saint Lawrence, the past season, was.

Flour,.....	13314½ barrels,
Ashes,.....	26084 do.
Pork and Beef,.....	15743 do.
Corn meal,.....	1875 do.
Whiskey,.....	1021 bls.
Butter,.....	27 do. and 858 Kegs.
Lard,.....	245 do. and 955 do.
Wheat,.....	280322 bushels.
Rye }	
Corn }	4881 do.
Hogs live and dead,.....	2636
Apples,.....	652 barrels.
&c. &c. &c. equal in all to 316025 barrels estimating 220 pounds, to be equal to a barrel of flour.	

The quantity of Merchandize brought by the Saint Lawrence to Upper Canada exceeds 8000 tons.

The amount paid for the cartage of these goods at the several portages exceeds £4000, and if no other advantage was to be attained by the proposed improvement than that of *doing away with the necessity of carting* it would fully justify the expenditure of a much larger sum than is required to effect it, for it must be remembered the losses sustained by delay, breakage and damage to goods, by carting, amount to more than the sums actually paid for it.

This however is but a small part of the saving which would be effected by an improvement of the navigation. It would enable owners of boats to reduce the number of men employed on them, so that produce could be taken down at a reduction of at least *one third* if not *one half*, from the present rates. Taking the business of 1830 for data, the account will stand thus.

River transport of—say 300000 bls. } at 2s. 6d. £37500 }	
off one third,.....	£12500
do. upwards of 8000 tons } Merchandize at 80s. per ton. } £32000	
Off 1s. 9d. per hundred weight,.....	14000
Annual saving,.....	£ 26590

We cannot but believe it is only necessary that these facts should be made known to the respective branches of the Legislature, and an improvement will be authorised.

The question then arises, on what scale ought the work to be undertaken? whether a *Steam-boat and Schooner navigation*, or an improvement for large barges and Durham boats, by means of *towing paths &c.* will be most advisable.

The subject has already excited a considerable discussion, and deserves to be maturely considered, and we would gladly leave it to the decision of the Legislature without remark; but it may perhaps be expected by the committee that we should offer an opinion on the subject, and we therefore respectfully suggest some of the reasons which influence our minds to the conclusion that a *good boat navigation* will be of most practical benefit to the commercial and agricultural interests of Upper Canada.

It is an admitted fact that "vessels with a light draft of water, of great length and breadth, in proportion to their depth, have a decided advantage in river navigation over vessels adapted to the ocean."—This remark was made (by the celebrated Brindley,) with reference to the tide rivers; and will certainly hold good when applied to the Saint Lawrence, where, in the upward navigation we have strong current to contend with.

It is, at least, doubtful how far Steam vessels could be profitably used, in carrying freight below Prescott, in as much as they must necessarily be built to draw very little water, and the current is too strong to admit of their being advantageously used for towing above Cornwall.

Vessels drawing more than four or five feet water cannot safely descend the river unless we abandon it at the several rapids, and deepen the bed, in many places, to accomplish which very great expense must be incurred.

Cheapness, expedition, and safety, are the objects to be attained, and we feel confident the boat improvement will best secure them.

Should the work be authorised by the Legislature at its approaching session, it is believed the whole may be put under contract in May next, and completed in twelve months.

Having no reason to believe the Lachine canal will soon be enlarged, the Lakes Saint Francois and Saint Louis being of very difficult navigation (if at all practicable) for large craft, and having reason to believe the commissioners appointed by the parliament of Lower Canada to superintend the survey, and report upon a plan for improving the navigation between these two lakes will recommend it by means of towing paths, &c. and we cannot consistently advise the *larger scale*, however desirable it may appear in prospective, more especially as the navigation of the river by the larger class of vessels used on lake Ontario, is wholly impracticable. For the information of the committee we beg leave to annex to

this report a copy of the act of the parliament of Lower Canada under which the commissioners above referred to are now proceeding.

By the munificence of the British government, the Rideau canal is now far advanced towards completion, a work admirably adapted to the purposes for which it was designed, and which, in the event of war, must prove eminently useful; but that the Saint Lawrence with a little improvement; will answer best for commercial purposes, we think will not be questioned, when the simple facts are taken into consideration, that the route by the Rideau is 54 miles longer, and has 350 feet more lockage than the Saint Lawrence, and that the navigation of the latter is open some weeks earlier in the spring, and later in the fall than the Rideau and Ottawa. The passage of the locks alone on the Rideau canal, we are informed, will ordinarily require twelve hours for any vessel.

We have it in our power to state from documents in our possession, the highly gratifying fact that the *trade on the Saint Lawrence has doubled since 1826*. And now that the Welland canal is opened, and bulky articles of produce will bear transport from the shores of Lake Erie and Lake Huron, it is but reasonable to anticipate an increase in a much greater ratio, in future.

Although we may already have justly incurred the charge of prolixity, the very great importance of the proposed improvement must be our apology for urging upon the consideration of the committee the necessity of united exertion to bring it about. The advantages to be derived from it will be felt by all classes of the community, and that immediately the work is undertaken.

We will only instance the article of *wheat*, of which nearly 300,000 bushels have been sent to market the past season, at an expense of nine pence per bushel.

Say 300,000 bushels at 9d.	£11,250
The improvement made, it can be transported at 6d. per bushel,.....	7,500
Saving,.....	£3,750

Here we have a saving of three thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds on this single article:—more than sufficient to pay the interest of the sum required, and by which every farmer who has a hundred bushels wheat to sell, gains *five dollars*, to say nothing of what he saves by purchasing his iron and other necessaries at a much cheaper rate.

Our estimate of the saving which would be realised to the country from the proposed improvement is founded upon the supposition that no larger boats than those now employed will be used; but if a corresponding improvement is made in Lower Canada, (which we have every reason to expect,) barges carrying 800 to 1000 barrels, could be profitably used, which would enable forwarders to transport *staves* and other lumber much cheaper than they are now rafted; the *delay and risk* now so ruinous, would be avoided, and the business on the river increased to an almost unlimited extent.

We only add, that if it were certain, that in *three years* an improvement on a larger scale would be called for, it would be good economy to make the one proposed, as the *saving in two years* will more than pay the expense of the work.

Respectfully submitted.

To (Signed,) W. L. WHITING,
(Signed,) GEORGE CRAWFORD,
JONAS JONES, Esq.
Chairmen of committee,
&c. &c. &c.

Messrs. WHITING and CRAWFORD.

GENTLEMEN,

In pursuance of the instruction contained in your letter, dated 13th November, 1830. I have, in company with Mr. George Keefer, Junr. Assistant Engineer, completed an examination and survey of the river Saint Lawrence, from Cornwall to Prescott, with a view to the improvement of the navigation, either for Steam boats drawing eight feet water, or for Durham boats of 4 feet draft of water.

The following report, together with the accompanying plans &c. are respectfully submitted.

First, for boats drawing four feet water, from Cornwall to Mill Roche, a distance of six miles and twenty-four chains, there will be little difficulty in forming a convenient towing path, along the bank of the river, with the exception of a few places, where it will be necessary to erect towing path bridges.

There are a quantity of loose stone to be removed from the channel, several small shoals to be deepened, and an entire cut around French's rift.

Generally the towing path may be formed by levelling the irregularities in the ground, on the top of the river bank; at other points it will be necessary to descend to the waters edge, where by arranging the stone every where found along the shore, or by laying one course of timber, and levelling the earth, stone and gravel, against it, a good path may be made. At some points where there