

The Government is giving much attention to the cheapening of the cost of transportation, especially from the wheat fields of the west to the sea, in the belief that a fair share of the export grain which is now carried largely by American vessels and railroads can be diverted to Canadian channels.

The question of a cheap through grain route from the west to the sea via the St. Lawrence is of paramount interest to the country at large. Three different Canadian routes have been discussed at length of late in the press, all of them possible competitors for this business; that via Georgian Bay ports and Toronto is one of vast importance to this province, and especially to this city. The great question for us is of course, whether it is possible for the Georgian Bay, Toronto and St. Lawrence route to compete with the Lake Erie, Buffalo and New York route in the transportation of western grain products to the seaboard. To do this successfully, there must be ample accommodation at Georgian Bay ports for the immense grain carrying vessels of the Upper Lakes. There must be elevator facilities similar to those now in existence in Buffalo, the grain must be transported across the peninsula to Toronto at a minimum cost, and modern facilities provided so that it can be transferred to vessels here with the utmost economy.

If Toronto can be made a transferring point on a great through grain route, this traffic will be to this city largely what it now is to Buffalo. There is hardly anything that could happen which would do more for our prosperity than this. We would not only derive the direct benefit incident to handling, but it would immensely increase our importance as a great distributing centre. The same vessels which would carry the grain from here to the seaboard, would undoubtedly bring back large quantities of general merchandise, and would contribute to keeping down rates by rail.

The first step necessary in carrying out this project, so far as Toronto is concerned, is the diversion of the River Don, which has long been a source of destruction to the harbour, owing to the alluvial deposit annually brought down by its waters, the removal of the deposit which has already accumulated along the water front of the city, to a sufficient extent to accommodate vessels adapted to the new St. Lawrence system, and the deepening of the entrance to the harbor to 18 feet. Already petitions from the City, the Harbor Commissioners and this Board, endorsed by the Owen Sound, Meaford, Collingwood and Midland Boards of Trade, for the necessary aid to carry out these improvements, have been forwarded to the Government, and we have reason to hope that within the coming year the work will be accomplished.

The following figures of the grain trade of the port of Buffalo will be of interest to members:—

RECEIPTS OF FLOUR AND GRAIN BY LAKE AT BUFFALO IN 1898	
Flour, bbls.	10,335.368
Wheat, bush	83,745.260
Corn, bush	69,094.166
Oats, bush	40,031.694
Barley, bush	11,548.093
Rye, bush	6,816.896
Flaxseed, bush	5,672.028
Total Grain	216,908.037

Buffalo also imports a considerable quantity of iron ore from the Minnesota ranges. The import last year was 895,789 tons. We have