

British Columbia has certainly grown very rapidly, and the North-west has developed in a way that is at least reasonably satisfactory. I find that in the returns for the five years from 1874 to 1879, there was an average of about thirty-six hundred entries per year for homesteads taken in Manitoba. For the ten years from 1880 to 1889, there was an average of about 23,000, and from 1890 to 1899, about 26,500, showing a fairly rapid increase in the growth of settlement in that province. In the last year I believe the immigration into Manitoba and the North-west Territories alone reached about 45,000 people. A very large number of these, one-third at least, came from the United States. It must be very gratifying to members of this House to know that so large a number of immigrants are coming to Canada, many of them returning to Canada who have been in the United States for a greater or less number of years. Rapid advancement has also been made in northern Ontario, as well as in the eastern provinces, in mining and agriculture. Reference is also made to the St. Lawrence river improvements. This brings prominently before us the question of transportation. To my mind there is no question of greater importance to the people of Canada than this. Much has been said in the last few years in this direction, and last autumn we were enabled to use, for the first time, a canal system affording a depth of water of 14 feet through the various canals of the St. Lawrence for the accommodation of larger vessels for transportation purposes. It is unfortunate that in past years so large a percentage of the exports of Canada have found their way across the ocean, not from Canadian ports, but from United States ports. As an illustration of this, I might point to the exports of a manufacturing institution of which I know something, and I find, in looking up the figures, that only about 15 per cent of the exports, amounting to several thousand cars, have gone out by Canadian ports. Going out by United States ports, the Canadian railways lose the advantage of the long haul to the seaboard, and our seaports lose the advantage of the export, and Canada the advantage of the credit of that export, while the United States gains thereby, because it adds to their export trade returns. I hope that

the deepening of the canal system will prevent largely, if not entirely, the exports of our products at least by United States routes. With the enormous inland lake system, reaching twelve to fifteen hundred miles up into the heart of the country, and this with comparatively little obstruction in that long distance, it seems to me it ought to be possible for us to have a canal system adequate, not only for the carrying of the products of Canada, but for the carrying of the large amounts of products tributary to these waters from the other side, and that the exports passing down through the lake system should be reversed and go out over and through the St. Lawrence route largely, instead of via United States ports. I notice that the exports of grain and wheat alone from Manitoba and the North-west for the four years beginning with 1886 and ending with 1889, averaged 5,750,000 bushels per annum. From 1890 to 1894 inclusive, the average was 13,300,000 bushels per annum, and from 1895 to 1899, the last five years, except 1900, which I have not got, the average was 24,750,000 bushels, about four times the average per annum in the previous five years. If we can expect no more rapid increase in the future than we have had in the past, we must expect that at least one hundred million bushels per annum of wheat from Manitoba and the North-west alone will be exported within five years, and it is hoped that our own route will be so improved as to enable all of that to go through Canadian channels, instead of through a foreign country. I do not know whether the depth of canal is sufficient for that or not, but it does seem to me that this question may again have to be considered with a view of having sufficient depth and length to our canals and locks to permit ocean vessels to come up into the lakes and load their grain, their iron and their steel, at Toronto, Hamilton, Detroit, and all the ports to Fort William, because the products of the various iron and steel companies that are growing up in the country will, in addition to the natural products, in the very near future form a very large export trade in themselves. The iron and steel trade with Great Britain has fallen off in the last few years tremendously. Ought not Canada to supply