

water is too turbid and full of sediment to be used. The Canal would rapidly fill up or require constant dredging. Reservoirs of the adjoining rivers have been proposed, but there are great objections to these, as they would interfere with the drainage of the marshes, and would themselves fill up. The waters of the Baie Verte, without resort to the constant expense of pumping up of the water from the lower level, are not available.

I contend that no expense is too great for any practicable short cut for the products of the North Shore and Prince Edward Island to St. John and the Eastern States, their natural market; but I would have that expenditure made upon the public work that would be most serviceable for the purpose. The traffic, to compete with railway carriage and by Straits of Canso, must be conveyed at a reasonable degree of speed. Now, the speed of steamers through the Suez Canal, where there are no locks, averages two and a half miles an hour. At that rate it would take ten hours to steam through the proposed Baie Verte Canal, besides the time required for lockage, making altogether twenty-four hours from Charlottetown to St. John. For sailing vessels, unless they were towed, it would take as long as sailing through the Straits of Canso—the detention from the prevailing contrary southwesterly wind, in sailing from Gulf to Bay, would be very great. No one could estimate it.

By the Ship Railway the transit can be made in two hours, thus enabling the voyage from Prince Edward Island to St. John to be made in twelve hours, a saving of just one half the time a Canal would take. The time of transit of sailing vessels would of course be the same as that for steamers, namely; from one to two hours, according to size.

The repairs and maintenance of a Canal would be far more expensive than a Ship Railway, owing to its being an exclusively hydraulic work, liable to injury by frost and ice, and to filling up with mud.

It would be closed up by ice earlier in the season and later in the spring, thus losing the advantage that the Ship Railway will have in transporting vessels before the Straits of Canso are open to navigation. In this way at least a month may be gained in the season. In other words, the Ship Railway would be open for seven months and the Canal six months.

But now to refer to an important point. The Ship Canal, as designed by the Government Engineers, and ranging in estimated cost from \$5,650,000 to \$8,500,000, could not pass any of the paddle steamers now plying in the Gulf and Bay. The locks were only forty feet wide; to widen them, and also the Canal, in order to pass such steamers, would add at least twenty-five per cent. to the estimates. The importance of this defect may be realized by the fact that at least one-half the tonnage of the Dominion coasting trade is carried in paddle-wheelers, and this will always continue so because of the shallow harbors necessitating that kind of steamers. (See Trade and Navigation Reports.) The Ship Railway will carry this class of steamer, and in fact all classes of vessels up to 1,000 tons register.

When we ask if any public work will pay, we should consider the indirect return and benefits as well as the direct return.