

able. In fact, with exception of the section between Lake Superior and Rainy Lake which is rough and broken and has never yet been explored with a view to a work of the kind, the ground is not unfavorable, but, as I have said, the idea of such a work is premature.

Canals.

On reference to what I have already stated, it will be seen that, from Dog Lake north-westward, to the Lake of the Woods, long navigable reaches occur in continuous succession, separated by short intervals of rapid water or other impediments. From the Height of Land Portage, where it strikes the *Savane* River, to the North-west Angle of the Lake of the Woods, the distance is three hundred and four miles, and the total amount of lockage that would be required, four hundred and twenty-five feet, being somewhat less than that of the Rideau Canal. By means of lock and dam, the whole of this distance might be rendered navigable without a break, at comparatively small cost, if wooden locks were adopted. The river channels between the navigable sections, are every where of rock, and generally favorable for the construction of such works as would be required.

With this extent of navigation might be connected the navigable water, east of the Height of Land, having a length, in Dog Lake and River, of thirty-five miles.

When the dam now in progress at Dog Lake is completed, the difference in level between the waters of Dog River and the *Savane* will be about a hundred feet, and a Canal with locks, by way of Muskaig Lake, might be constructed to connect the two. Lac des Mille Lacs would be the summit level, and it has sufficient water for a Canal both ways:

This would give three hundred and fifty miles of unbroken navigation, approaching at its eastern extremity to within twenty-five miles of Lake Superior, and at its western to within ninety miles of Fort Garry.

All the lockage required would cost less than would a railroad of two hundred miles to Rainy Lake, and it would be of vastly greater utility.

A short Railway of twenty-five miles, from Dog Lake to Thunder Bay, would connect the navigation with Lake Superior; while a similar work of ninety miles, from Fort Garry to the North-west Angle of the Lake of the Woods, would join it to the Red River Settlement. The latter Railway would be over very even ground.

I have offered these suggestions, not with a view of conveying the impression that they should be immediately acted upon, but to shew what is practicable, and what would be the true way of opening a line adapted for heavy traffic, when the country has attained a stage of development to warrant the expenditure which it would involve.

SYSTEM OF WORK BY CONTRACT OR OTHERWISE.

The work is of that nature, which, from long experience in carrying on similar operations, in remote sections, I believe could be better performed by engaging good workmen and competent overseers than by contract.

Contract work is all well enough in a settled country, where, if one man fails in accomplishing an undertaking others are always ready to take it up; but, in such a region as that in which the works under consideration would be carried on, the Government would be, in a measure, at the mercy of the contractor, as for instance, if he should not make provision for a particular work, or from any cause break off, it would throw the enterprise back for a full year. Contractors, as a general rule, would only undertake work in a region so remote in the hope of large profits, which the comparatively small sums set down for each particular section would not bear. They would, as usual, have endless bills of extras, where every little contingency could not be foreseen; and, if it appeared to be a losing business, would delay and petition for increase in their rates, and might, indeed, abandon the works altogether. Moreover, the Indians, in some of the sections, have to be very carefully dealt with. At such a distance from the restraints of law, none but men of good character should be brought among them, and spirituous liquors should be strictly prohibited.

Under a system of contract, the Government would have little to say as to the class of men to be employed, and the officers in charge of the works might be unable to prevent liquor from being smuggled in. The Indians sometimes assemble at Fort Frances and on Rainy River, to the number of five or six hundred, and if a few barrels of whisky were rolled amongst them the consequences might, undoubtedly would, be serious.