

CANADA'S CANAL PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION

AS to the importance to Canada of retaining the control of traffic seeking its way to the world markets from the West and North-West, by the route of the Great Lakes, there is practically unanimity of opinion in the Dominion. Canadians are agreed that this is essential to our commercial independence, and that without it even the preservation of the political union of the Provinces and the maintenance of our position as an integral part of the British Empire would become difficult to the verge of the impossible. Dependence upon any other nation, however friendly, for access to their own seaboard, is repugnant to any self-respecting people, and would inevitably lead to commercial subserviency—if not, indeed, to political capitulation. As to the best way to ensure this commercial independence, however, there is not the same unanimity of opinion. Yet even among those who differ as to plans and projects there is almost entire agreement that a Canadian waterway capable of carrying all the grain of that part of the North-West which may be said to be naturally tributary to the Great Lakes is absolutely essential.

Commercial
and Political
Independence
Involved.

The season during which the grain crop of our North-West can be transported to the seaboard by water—from the end of harvest to the close of navigation—is short, and the canal system we must construct should, therefore, be as capacious as possible. Again, inasmuch as the vessels that will carry this grain must find employment in the carrying of other kinds of freight during the rest of the summer, our canal system must be able to pass through it any vessel that can profitably navigate the lakes; anything less than that would not meet the requirements.

Provide for
Large Vessels.

Our neighbors in the State of New York realize quite as clearly as we do the importance of the control of the water-borne traffic of the West and North-West, and with splendid and entirely admirable energy they are doing all that nature will permit to divert that trade into channels of their own. They are enlarging and improving the Erie Canal, and, when completed, it will be without exception the finest barge canal in the world. The

Competition of
the Erie Canal.