

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."—(Toronto Board of Trade Pamphlet.)

Commercial
and
Political
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ence.
Involved.

This statement of the problem does not go far enough. Not only is a waterway necessary to accommodate the grain traffic of the North-West, but the transportation of other products must be provided for as well.

The total traffic of the Canadian Canal system in 1911 (38,030,353 tons), was divided as follows:—

	Tons.
Products of the mine	28,716,457
Agricultural products	5,389,070
Manufactures	2,359,063
Products of the forest	1,546,139
Farm Stock	19,624

Farm products formed only 10% of the traffic on the Sault Canal, 43% of the Welland traffic, and 32% of the St. Lawrence traffic.

About 750,000 tons of grain and flour which passed all the way from the head of the lakes to Montreal was included three times in the above aggregate, viz.: in the figures for the Sault, Welland, and St. Lawrence Canals respectively. The total amount of agricultural products moved was, therefore, only 3,889,070 tons. Agricultural products, therefore, formed little more than 10% of the aggregate traffic of the Canadian canal system.