

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much  
larger circulation among the business community  
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and the Pacific Coast, than any other paper in Can-  
ada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also  
reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manu-  
facturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, OCTOBER 29, 1898.

## PROPOSED OTTAWA RIVER ROUTE.

The report of the senate committee appointed to investigate and report upon the feasibility of the construction of a canal from Georgian Bay to Montreal, via Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa river, has been published, together with several maps intended to elucidate the report. The report states that from an engineering standpoint, no physical difficulty exists in the construction of such a waterway. The total distance from the mouth of French river, on Georgian Bay, or Lake Huron, to Montreal, is 430 miles. Of this total distance 351 miles are naturally navigable and 78 miles can be improved to be made suitable for navigation by steam vessels, leaving 29 miles of canalling. This, however, includes the Lachine canal, already built, further reducing the amount of canalling required to nearly 21 miles.

One feature of the work frequently referred to in the report is the enormous waterpower that could be rendered available. One of the engineers examined said that the Ottawa river could furnish a greater amount of water-power than any river on the continent. Water-powers could be developed from 20 to 40 miles apart along the entire route.

Reviewing the evidence presented, the committee conclude that the con-

struction of a canal is beyond a doubt feasible and practicable.

The proposal is to build a canal with fourteen feet of water. One of the engineers figures out that the cost of carrying grain from Chicago to Montreal, via this route, would be 50 cents per ton, or 1.1-2 cents per bushel for wheat. The cost from Fort William would be about the same. There would be, of course, a great saving of distance in the proposed route, the route being well on to 100 miles shorter than via the great lakes to Montreal. In concluding their comment of the evidence given and information secured, the committee say:

"Its construction will be of great commercial advantage to the trade of Canada, affording, as it would, an additional outlet for the conveyance of the heavier grades of freight from the west to the seaboard, via Montreal and Quebec. It would also, from its being a more

these industries and the opening up for settlement of the country will necessarily be a means of creating centres of population, and so, as your committee have already observed, it will be a means of greatly increasing and benefitting the commerce of the Dominion, and its construction is not only advisable but necessary."

"They also desire to call attention to the advantage to be derived therefrom, as respects the present settlers of the west; as also to the impetus that would ensue in the future to the increase of the agricultural population of that fertile section of the country by affording them easy, cheap and safe transportation for their products, and thus the large area of land, now unproductive, would become owned by a desirable producing class of settlers, who would consequently be contributors to the revenue of the Dominion. Under the various circumstances, your committee would strongly recommend the contemplated enterprise to the favorable consideration of the government and that they may be pleased to ex-



Map showing the proposed short water route from the upper Lakes to Montreal, via French and Ottawa rivers, compared with the present route via Lakes Erie and Ontario, etc.

direct route and shorter, have the effect of reducing the cost of transportation upon these freights; for instance, grain from Lakes Michigan and Superior could be laid down in Montreal at a lower rate, and at Quebec at no higher rate than the lowest ever yet reached between the lakes and New York. Consequently a great deal of that trade which now goes by way of the Erie Canal would be diverted to Montreal and our Canadian ports. And, furthermore, your committee are unanimously of the opinion that the development and use of the enormous water power along the route for electrical purposes, in the mining and smelting of iron and other ores which are so abundant in the Ottawa Valley, and which cannot now be developed by reason of the want of cheap communication and transportation, would of itself alone almost warrant the construction of the canal. It would also develop an enormous industry in the hard wood, pulp wood, pulp and other lumber industries of the Ottawa Valley. The development of all

tend such assistance in such manner, mode and conditions as will ensure the early construction and speedy completion of the work; feeling quite assured that the people of the country when they are made aware of the advantages to be derived from the undertaking will duly appreciate any action the government may take which will facilitate the construction of a work of such national importance; it being an all-Canadian route from and to the seaboard to the west."

The vast benefit to the Dominion which would result from the opening of the route is not a debatable question, providing the waterway could be opened at reasonable cost. It is only necessary to imagine a large part of the enormous traffic of the Great Lakes passing through an interior portion of Canada, building up cities and industries along the route, to say nothing of the local development of the country served thereby.