

the seaboard. By taking advantage of it we can readily secure a 24-foot waterway to the ocean with a minimum mileage of canal construction, and the work can be completed at less than one-quarter the expense of any other proposition advanced. It is true that originally there were some obstructions to navigation, but they have all been overcome, so that today a vessel may load with grain at Duluth or Port Arthur and discharge at the docks of Manchester in the heart of England provided the vessels do not draw more than 14 feet. All that is necessary to make this route available for ships of 10,000 tons capacity is to deepen the existing channels of navigation to 24 feet, and when that is done it will be possible to deliver the products of this country in Europe at the minimum of cost for transportation. The influence of this waterway on the progress and development of an enormous tributary region is incalculable.

Water competition from the continent of Europe to the head of the great lakes will inevitably result in a lowering of railway tolls and an improvement in their service that will be of benefit to the whole country.

The Welland canal connecting Lake Erie with Lake Ontario at present has a maximum depth of 14 feet. The Canadian government long ago realized the fact that this canal would not meet the requirements of the present day, and some time ago engineers were engaged to report on the possibilities of constructing a new canal with a minimum depth of 24 feet. Their report induced the government to undertake the work of building a new waterway from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, and within a reasonable time there will be a new canal opened which will permit the passage of vessels drawing not more than 24 feet. In the St. Lawrence river proper there are six canals in operation, ranging from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 14 miles in length, each having a maximum depth of 14 feet in harmony with the existing Welland canal. These canals would necessarily have to be deepened to 24 feet to correspond with the new Welland canal, but the total mileage of canal reconstruction required would only amount to 73 miles, including the new Welland canal.

At different points in the St. Lawrence river changes would require to be made to permit of the passage of vessels of large capacity, but the work is one of small magnitude as compared with the other propositions before the people and there are no great engineering difficulties to be overcome at any part of the route.

Between Montreal and Quebec vessels pass through Lake St. Peter. Prior to 1851 vessels drawing more than 12 feet were barred from passage through this lake. Since that time by continuous work there has been constructed a channel 450 to 600 feet wide with a minimum depth of 30 feet at low water, and a 35 foot channel is now under way. From Quebec to the sea there is a free run down the St. Lawrence river with an unlimited depth of water.

It might be said that the people of the United States would not be inclined to make free use of the St. Lawrence route even if it were deepened to 24 feet, owing to the fact that a portion of the route would be under the complete control of the Canadian government, but there is absolutely nothing in such an argument. Transportation knows no boundary lines and traffic will seek the cheapest route irrespective of its ownership. As an illustration of this fact we might say that in 1900 a company was formed in the city of Chicago for the purpose of running a line of steamers between that city and Great Britain, and two or three trips were actually made by the St. Lawrence route, but the ships were necessarily of small capacity and were discontinued because they could not be made to show a profit. And today according to press reports grain is being loaded at Duluth for direct shipment to Italy by way of the St. Lawrence river, but this will also prove unprofitable owing to the fact that they will be small capacity steamers.

The Canadian government would no more think of placing obstacles in the way of business passing through the St. Lawrence river than the United States would think of barring foreign vessels from using the Panama canal when it is completed.