

the many undesirable real estate agents, who have now disappeared from that part of the country, been allowed to continue in their depredations; had the extreme optimist been allowed a full supply of hot ink, a disastrous reaction would have been the inevitable result. The banks should have assumed the role of doctor of finance long before they did.

Even now there are signs of the approach of a slight industrial and financial depression, which might have been infinitely worse had wild business and finance proceeded apace. It was time a few months ago for the banks to say, "Stop." It is time for them to say, "Proceed—slowly." The Canadian banks will injure their interests if now they exercise too rigid a jurisdiction over legitimate industrial expansion. Wild speculation has almost passed, and this should mean a corresponding relaxation of available funds. On the other hand, were the banks to open the floodgates of their wealth, those undesirable conditions, which have been checked, would be renewed. It is the time for strict economy and conservatism in business. Large industrial concerns are laying off hands—an unwelcome, but in one wise a healthy sign.

Canada will have a trade reaction, not serious, not lengthy, that is if the country will screw upon its young shoulders a head full of experienced brains. The levelling up of financial with commercial conditions must be patiently awaited. This, for Western Canada, is a more difficult task than for Eastern Canada. The West is experiencing its growing time. To check growing, hurts; but it is better to grow slowly and strong than to be artificially nurtured and unstable.

When capital catches up to commerce in the race of progress, the Dominion may start on another spurt of industrial enterprise. Until then commonsense, economy, and conservatism. It is useless to hurl gall-tipped spears of criticism at any Government, be it Liberal in politics, of Conservative; at any bank, be it liberal in policy, or conservative. Economic conditions are as they are; criticism will not alter them. The legislator may make or unmake laws, the editor may write until his pen runs dry, the banker may try to please till he loses faith in the art of giving satisfaction, the business man may complain until his features adopt new shapes—this and much more will not remedy the things that are, and the things that must be. It is of little avail to kick against the snowdrift of natural circumstances. The sunshine which melts must be awaited.

CANAL PROJECTS.

When someone becomes very impatient, the Georgian Bay Canal scheme may reach a point known as an issue. The country, perhaps, is half afraid of such an enormous undertaking, involving, as it would, an expenditure of more than one hundred million dollars. We have already a fairly large system of canals under Government control. First, there is the through route, divided as follows, between Montreal and the head of Lake Superior:—

	Miles.
Lachine Canal	8½
Lake St. Louis and River St. Lawrence	16
Soulanges Canal	14
Lake St. Francis and River St. Lawrence	33
Cornwall Canal	11
River St. Lawrence	5
Farran's Point Canal	1½
River St. Lawrence	10
Rapide Plat Canal	3¾
River St. Lawrence	4
Galops Canal	7½
River St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario	236
Welland Canal	26¾
Lake Erie, Detroit River, Lake St. Clair, Lake Huron, etc.	580
Sault Ste. Marie Canal	1¾
Lake Superior to Port Arthur	266

Total 1,223 7-12

Then there are the waterways from Ottawa to Lake Champlain, the Grenville, Carillon, St. Anne's, Chambly, St. Ours Canals, Ottawa to Kingston and Perth Canal, Rideau Canal, Lake Ontario at Trenton to Lake Huron at mouth of River Severn waterway, Trent Canal, the ocean to the Bras d'Or Lakes waterway, and St. Peter's Canal.

The Toronto Board of Trade, who are naturally interested in a canal scheme connecting Georgian Bay with Lake Ontario, have discussed the subject. It is thought unwise for the Government to enter into an obligation that will further increase the public debt. That no private enterprise of this description should be encouraged by guarantee or otherwise, except without risk of expense to the public, is another of their opinions, with which they will find many in agreement. The Railway and Transportation Committee of the Board advocate the construction of a ship canal connecting Georgian Bay with Lake Ontario by way of Lake Simcoe.

It is thought that such a canal, twenty-two feet in depth, can be constructed for less than \$45,000,000, and that it would reduce the carrying distance between the Upper Lakes and the Atlantic seaboard by several hundred miles for the round trip. The diversion to Lake Ontario of a large portion of the enormous traffic which now seeks an outlet by Lake Erie to the Atlantic seaboard and the New England, Eastern and Middle States for consumption or export is another advantage claimed. A large portion of the return commodity and package freight that originates in these States should be diverted to this route, and a large portion of the export grain, American and Canadian, should find its way out of Lake Ontario by way of Kingston in barges through the St. Lawrence to the great advantage of Kingston and Montreal. The saving effected by this route would probably permit of tolls that would more than pay maintenance and interest on the cost of the canal.

The major portion of the tolls would be collected on American traffic that is not for export, but for home consumption, and would not seek any other proposed route. Any cheapening of the rates of carriage on commodities to and from our great West would be of immense benefit to the whole Dominion, and the placing of the manufacturing section of the Province of Ontario on the through cheapest route to and from the great West would be of immense benefit to the Province, the West and the whole Dominion. The construction of a ship canal from Georgian Bay by way of the French and Ottawa Rivers to Montreal is under consideration by the Government. In this connection it is claimed that the distance by such a canal to Montreal from the Upper Lakes will be but seventy miles shorter than by the Huron and Ontario and St. Lawrence route; that there are some sixty feet more of a rise to overcome by locks; that the rocky formation of the country will make the canal unsafe for navigation; that a ship will take from eight to nine days to traverse the distance from French River to Montreal and return; that the canal will cost from \$120,000,000 to \$150,000,000 to construct; that little else but grain could be depended upon to seek that route; that this traffic must be taken at the expense of the St. Lawrence route, and that no reasonable toll that could be imposed on all the possible traffic will pay cost of maintenance and interest.

The scheme advocated by the Board of Trade will be laid before the Dominion Government with a request that the Huron-Ontario route be thoroughly investigated before any other is decided upon.

Canals may be the joy of the small commercial barque, but they are certainly not the pet navigation course of big steamships. This is one objection to the hundred million dollar Georgian Bay Canal. If built, it is doubtful whether the big sea vessels would take kindly to several hundred miles of canal navigation. The shorter the canal the more likely its commercial success. These facts should be borne in mind when any such scheme for Canada is under consideration.