

A canal upon the scale recommended would also be of great advantage to the lumber trade, by making the locks 10 feet wide as proposed, rafts &c. of the ordinary size might pass through with ease and safety, avoiding the expence of pilots as well as the danger in running over the rapids.

It has hitherto been argued that steamboats are injurious to canals and should therefore not be admitted, but the fallacy of this argument we believe has been fully demonstrated in Europe. At all events we feel convinced that it can only apply to canals of small dimensions.

Having been particularly directed to ascertain the situation of the channel on the north side of Barnhart's Island, we devoted some time to that purpose; finding however upon due examination that all endeavours to render that channel practicable for the transportation of lumber and other produce from the upper country must ultimately prove abortive. There being no possibility of approaching it with safety in descending the river on account of its immediate connexion with the principal rapid of the Long Sault, where no vessels or rafts can ever attempt to descend.

The channel along the North side of the island is much contracted and very shoal, without water sufficient to float a loaded boat of the ordinary size. But inasmuch as it is not capable of access at the head, we abandoned all ideas of making improvements on any other part of that channel, besides it might probably be questionable whether we have the right of such improvement since it cannot be done without interfering with the island, which is unfortunately claimed by another government.

By adhering to the estimates it will be seen that from Mille Roches a little above the confluence of the two streams that form Sheek's Island, we propose to construct a waste weir across the north branch in order to raise a sufficient depth of water and entirely abandon the river to Cornwall bay, where our line of Canal terminates. The navigation to the foot of Barnhart's Island being almost exclusively claimed by the State of New York, and the remaining part to Cornwall being obstructed by shoals and rapids, we deemed it inexpedient to attempt any improvement in the natural stream, but make an entire canal on our own shore for which the situation is well adapted.

It is highly gratifying to us to be enabled to state for the information of your Excellency and others, that the natural advantages for the improvement of the navigation of the river St. Lawrence, are such in general as far exceed our most sanguine anticipations.

The Long Sault, which has been thought an almost insurmountable barrier in the navigation, possesses uncommon facilities for canal operations. The only place on the whole route that will be attended with any particular inconvenience is at the rapid Plat, the lands adjacent to the river lie very high and will cause some deep excavation which it is impossible to avoid.

It has been suggested that the navigation of the river St. Lawrence might be sufficiently improved by deepening the natural bed, constructing locks, &c. and supersede the receipts and expence of canals. We feel conscious however from actual survey and due reflection that such opinions could only originate with persons who have not properly examined the nature of the different situations or at least, they cannot be fully aware of the expence and inconvenience that must naturally attend an attempt to effect a channel capable of passing vessels down those rapids where the work would be constantly exposed to interruptions by the water. Partial improvements can probably be made that would materially assist the passage of boats; but the only effectual method of making a safe channel for vessels of burden is to cut canals where the river cannot interfere. It will be seen however that we propose to adopt the natural channel where it appears practicable. The distance from Johnstown to Cornwall by the river is about 47 miles and the total fall ninety five feet. It may not be unworthy of remark that 13 miles of excavation and eleven locks averaging six feet lifts is all that will be required, (having neither aqueduct or culvert) to effect a complete line of navigation, the whole of the above distance. All the rapids above the Long Sault are practicable in going down, vessels will of course prefer the natural channel being more expeditious and less expensive. It is those ascending only, that will require the canal which allows us to contract the width of those places and greatly reduce the expence.

It would be impossible for us at this moment to anticipate the innumerable advantages that must naturally result from an enterprise like this; neither do we consider it necessary to point out the importance of opening such a line of communication for advancing the prosperity of this country; for if we look back to Europe and even to the state of New York we see the fact fully demonstrated.

With such salutary examples before us, it is to be hoped, that every individual acquainted with the geography of our country, and the advantages which the hand of nature has so liberally bestowed upon us, is fully convinced of the profits it would secure to the trade of these Colonies. We shall therefore only attempt to point out a few leading facts immediately connected with our commercial interest.

The St. Lawrence being the shortest and most direct line of communication with the Atlantic, will, by removing a few natural obstructions, ever be the highway for commerce notwithstanding improvements in any other quarter.

The Rideau Canal, if carried into effect upon the plan suggested, will be a most stupendous work, and will in time of war be of infinite importance to the security of this Province; being in the interior it will form a safe depot and open an independent line of communication through the country completely out of reach of the enemy. It will not only be eminently useful in a military point of view, but it will also open an outlet to a large extent of fertile country hitherto nearly excluded the market, and materially facilitate the transport of lumber from immense forests, now one of the chief sources of trade. Besides, if accomplished by the Imperial Government, (without the aid of the Provincial funds as at present contemplated, it will cause a large amount of capital to be brought into and expended in the Colonies which will render it the more desirable. But as it respects our commercial interest in general, the St. Lawrence is an object of primary importance, and which should naturally first occupy the attention of our Legislature, as the particular object in expending money on canals is to facilitate and expedite the transportation of our commodities to market. No route, we believe, possesses equal natural advantages with the one now in contemplation; being the shortest, it will always enable forwarding merchants to transport goods much cheaper and quicker than by any other line, and it is reasonable to suppose that commerce will find its way by the shortest and cheapest route.

Another important advantage worthy of notice in this work is, the many valuable sites that will be obtained for mills and machinery, as there is not a durable stream of water from Kingston to Lower Canada on our side, except the Gananoque, capable of turning mills for manufacturing the quantity of flour necessary for home consumption, an inconvenience severely felt by the inhabitants of a large tract of country which, for the growth of wheat, is not surpassed by any other part of the Province. Among the few mills occasionally in operation, not one of them save on the stream above alluded to is capable of making good merchantable flour for market, and owing to the fluctuations of the water in the river during the summer, and the accumulation of ice in the winter, they become so limited in their operations that farmers are frequently compelled to go from 40 to 50 miles and cross into the United States to get grinding done, and then (unless they smuggle) their grain is subject to duty in crossing the lines.

Mills and machinery, to any necessary extent, may be erected at Mill Roche, Cornwall, and at the foot of most Rapids where the canal will descend by means of Locks, and where there will be an inexhaustible supply of water at all seasons completely at command without materially interfering with the navigation.

This, among many others, is an object that will not be the least to stimulate the trade and agriculture of this rising Colony.

Our present shackled mode of conveyance up the St. Lawrence causes a very serious impediment to the trade of our upper districts; the enormous rates of transportation amount almost to a prohibition of heavy articles. It excludes merchants & others along the frontier from a fair competition with their American neighbours. The easy access to the New York market by means of their canals, gives them a decided advantage over our trade, and except we effect similar improvements on our line of transit, a great proportion of the commerce of Upper Canada must necessarily seek a vent the same way, which will cause a constant drain of money from this province to the U. S. and encourage smuggling (which no restrictions can ever entirely suppress) to the injury of our revenue.