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## The Canadian Monetary Times.

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 1869.

## THE CANADIAN CANALS.

## VI.

The promoters of the Caughnawaga Canal have a clear and distinct end in view, attainable at a cost which cannot be regarded as excessive. The scheme stands prominently forward in connection with the St. Lawrence navigation. Its leading advocates are men of weight and character, who have carefully studied the question, and whose opinions are entitled to respect. Up to a certain point, there can be no difference of opinion as to the results looked for, and possibly they are sufficiently strong to exact general support for the work. That is, even the limited benefits attainable—if the phrase is not too strong, we will add, by common consent—appear to mark out this work as an actual necessity. The question is, if the line is not drawn somewhat in advance of what really is feasible. The object of the canal is to connect the waters of the St. Lawrence, at

Lake Champlain—itsself the head waters of a tributary of the great river, the Richelieu which debouches at Sorel. The connection is now made by the Chambly Canal. Lumber for the Albany market, from the Ottawa, now passes to the north of the island of Montreal, and proceeds by the St. Lawrence to Sorel, at which point it ascends the Richelieu river. One lock only occurs in this navigation before the Chambly basin is met—a beautiful sheet of water, at the base of which, a quarter of a century ago, stood the old fort, constructed under the French domination. It was then in good order, and was used as a garrison, having been kept in repair by the Imperial Government. It passed into Provincial keeping, at once to fall into ruin. We mention the site to assist the memory of those of our readers whose geography needs to be refreshed. It is here that the Chambly Canal has been constructed to overcome the rapids which impede the navigation between this spot and St. John's. The length is 11½ miles; the locks are not large—120 by 24 feet, with a depth of 6 feet. The proposed Caughnawaga Canal from Lake St. Louis to St. John's would pass over ground, being the base of the triangle, having its apex at Sorel. A comparison may thus be made:

From a point in the St. Anne's basin of the Ottawa, by the channel north of the island of Montreal, to the St. Lawrence, and by that river to Sorel.....	60
By the Richelieu River to Chambly.....	45½
Chambly Canal to St. John's.....	11½
	117

On the other hand—

From the above-named point in St. Anne's basin to the Lake St. Louis, at the point proposed as the entry to the Caughnawaga Canal, opposite entry of Lachine Canal.....	15
Length of proposed canal.....	25½
	40½

Accordingly, by this important water connection about 78 miles of navigation would be saved. This saving of distance would lessen the freight of lumber destined from the west to the New York market. In that fact alone, therefore, an argument may be said to lie for the necessity of the canal. It would appear that the most feasible plan is to commence the canal above the tier of locks at the Beauharnois canal. The reports speak of this work as a navigable feeder. But the term is a misnomer, and tends to mislead, and the sooner it is rejected the better. In round figures, Lake St. Louis—that is the water at the head of the Lachine canal—is about 30 feet lower than the level of Lake Champlain. Accordingly, the proposed canal, taking its origin in the reach of the Beauharnois canal,

and supplied by the waters of the St. Lawrence, would have its main level 37½ feet above the water of Lake Champlain, to which it would descend by three locks; whereas five locks will be needed to fall to the level of the St. Lawrence, identical, indeed, with the sortie of the Beauharnois canal. With this location we have the supply of the St. Lawrence as the fountain head, the canal itself following a line of country suitable to it, a line sufficiently direct, a connection given in the most feasible mode both with the St. Lawrence proper and with the Ottawa, at a cost estimated, and we believe fairly, at from four and a quarter to four and a half millions of dollars. We are quite prepared to concede the importance of this work, even its necessity, but when we come to the consideration of the view that it ought to take precedence of the development of the St. Lawrence, we fear we must differ from some with whom we should prefer to agree.

The present Chambly canal would by no means be superseded by the proposed canal, but it would necessarily lose a portion of the traffic now passing through it, that of the Ottawa. The Chambly Canal is essential to the region of the St. Maurice, having its outlet at Three Rivers which is yearly becoming of more importance. The misfortune is, that it has not been well managed, and it is one of those things in which men of astute intellect and honest intentions are likely to be over-reached. The limits have fallen into too few hands, and this monopoly has worked the usual result in impeding the progress of the district. We trust, however, that this will be the fact but for a time. As the Chambly Canal can receive, without delay, all that may be sent through it, extraordinary facilities are offered for the transport of lumber.

Agreeing thoroughly with an anticipation of the favorable influence the Caughnawaga Canal would work in the lumber trade, either from Ottawa, or by the St. Lawrence with Boston and Albany, it remains for us to consider, this larger and more commercial side of the question. It is urged that vessels freighted with grain, from the Western States, will descend the Saint Lawrence, and passing by this canal to Lake Champlain, will connect with the Boston Railway at Burlington. There the transfer of cargo will take place to supply the necessities of the Eastern States. The return trip will be freighted with New England manufactures. Further, it is considered that this water communication will be followed to Whitehall, and thence by the canal to Albany, superseding the Erie Canal. We must leave for a future occasion, the former view, i. e., the bearing of the proposed Caughnawaga Canal, on the trade