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The Canadian Monetary Times.

THURSDAY, JULY 15, 1869.

THE CANADIAN CANALS.

VII.

There is an additional argument advanced in favor of the Caughnawaga Canal, on the ground that the Erie Canal presents constant delays to the passage of freight. It is held that a water communication by Lake Champlain would admit a full laden propeller to Whitehall, where the process now observed at Buffalo (to pass to Albany) would take place, viz: the transfer of cargo to barges. It is fair to say that is not impossible that a certain quantity of the freight might take that route. As an incidental argument it is not without value; but to place such reasoning in the first rank, is to give the Caughnawaga Canal no higher claim than that of an experiment. For it is just as possible, that on the route being tried, it would be found not to answer, and hence in no way would be followed.

Independently of the facilities gained for the Ottawa timber trade, the strongest reasons

for the construction of this work are said to lie in the direction of the New England States, which must ever be large consumers of Western cereals. There are now four routes traversed by the cargoes which supply this want, two of which are tributary to the Erie Canal, at Albany. The first by the Hudson River to New York, and thence to the sea ports convenient for its distribution, Boston standing first in the list. The second, by railway, the freight crossing the Hudson to Greenbush, opposite Albany, whence it follows the railway to Boston, a distance of 200 miles. The third is found on the main railway lines at Buffalo, the New York Central and the New York and Erie. Both have established western connections, and the former runs on to the Boston railway, so that freight once placed on the cars, is carried undisturbed to its destination. The amount received at Buffalo is about one-half of the whole movement of the western freight. To be more precise, it may be said to vary from nine to eleven twentieths. At Oswego, it ranges from one-eighth to one-fifth, while at Montreal it is from one-eighth to one-eleventh. The quantity passing by Buffalo is divided between the Erie Canal and these two railroads. Owing to the imperfection of the figures at the service of the writer, no reliable comparison can be made of the relative quantities. According to the report of the Auditor of the Canal Department of the State of New York, dated March 12, 1869, the "tons arriving at tide water by way of the Erie Canal, products of Western States and Canada," are as follows: [p. 161.]

Products of the Forest	891,071 Tons.
" Agriculture.....	1,183,816 "
Manufactures	4,354 "
Total.....	2,215,222 "

and the difference between this amount and the total passing east from Buffalo, will give the quantity carried by railway, whereas compared with the quantity taken by railways, we have the following [p. 38] total movements for 1868:—

New York Canals	6,442,225 Tons.
" Central Railway....	1,846,509 "
Erie Railway	3,908,243 "
Total.....	12,197,067* "

that is up and down, giving a rude approximation, that half the total passes by the Canal.

The fourth connection between the Western waters and the east has been dictated by the principle on which the Caughnawaga Canal is advocated; that, as a railway con-

* The writer begs leave to quote the words of the Auditor of New York, Mr. James A. Bell, to show that this imperfect comparison is beyond the reach of individual industry. "The important exhibit of these tables might be rendered doubly so, if the railroads would consent or the Legislature would compel them to make their returns conform more nearly to those of the Canals."

nection, is indispensable to bring freight inland—(this peculiar side of the problem must be borne in mind)—to New England, from the Albany terminus of the Erie Canal,—why not seek that connection without the geography of the canal? Ogdensburgh, on the St. Lawrence, furnishes exactly that point. It is 223 miles distant by water from the Ontario mouth of the Welland Canal, and by railway 158 miles from Burlington. This distance, added to the railway interval, between Burlington and Boston, 248 miles, will give a total distance of 406 miles between Ogdensburgh and Boston. It was held, and the theory seems so perfect that it stands out as a warning against indulgence in a priori reasoning, that the Welland propeller, with its 4,400 bbls. of flour, would leave Chicago and passing through the Welland Canal in place of depositing its cargo at Oswego, a distance of 138 miles on Lake Ontario, could go on to Ogdensburgh, 85 miles farther. At Oswego the cargo actually and positively was known to be from 11 to 15 days from Boston. At Ogdensburgh, by every fair calculation, it was 30 hours. The line was accordingly built by Boston capital. The result has totally disappointed expectations; in round figures only five per cent. of the quantity carried from the west having passed by this line. It may be explained, to some extent, by the fact that a certain portion of the grain destined for Boston never enters lake Ontario at all. For, conceding in any way the necessity of railway connection, it was open to apply the principle at any point, and practically it has resulted that it has been appealed at Buffalo itself, and grain once placed on the railway cannot be profitably moved from it, except under very special circumstances.

The effect of the water connection of the St. Lawrence with Boston by Burlington, viewed by the light of the experience of the Ogdensburgh Railway, to our mind is not encouraging. If we suppose a propeller at Burlington quay, and inquire what has been achieved, what attained, by passing the St. Lawrence and entering Lake Champlain, the answer can be given categorically. The propeller is 158 miles nearer (railway distance) to Boston than it was at Ogdensburgh, with the identical necessities of transshipment to the railway cars, and in the expectation of receiving back a cargo of a like character, having traversed the distance,

From Ogdensburg to the Beauharnois Canal.....	97 Miles.
Through the Beauharnois Canal and the Caughnawaga Canal to St. Johns	41½ "
From St. Johns to Burlington...	75 "
Total	213½ "