

Royal
Commission
of March,
1914.

63. By order of 18th March, 1914, a Royal Commission was appointed, consisting of William Sanford Evans, of Winnipeg, Frank Stephen Meighen, of Montreal, and Edouard Gohier, of the same city, to enquire into and report upon the:—

“ Proposed construction of a deep inland waterway, providing for accommodation for the large Lake carriers from the Georgian Bay, in the Province of Ontario, to the Port of Montreal, in the Province of Quebec, from the point of view of the commercial feasibility and national advantages to be derived from such a waterway, and in that connection to inquire into and consider the following questions, namely:—

“ 1. A study of the transportation problem in relation to the proposed waterway; to what extent can it help in developing the resources of the country?

“ 2. The advantages of a large waterway from the Lakes to the sea board, open to the largest type of Lake carriers; the feasibility of these carriers navigating such waterway and the influence on the rate regulation of transport, especially upon cheaper commodities which the country produces.

“ 3. The competition of the waterway with the railways; effect on railways, by creating new industries, on account of cheap transportation of low grade freight that cannot be handled by rail, causing an expansion in industries, an increase to the population and a demand for a higher class of freight seeking transportation by rail.

“ 4. The probable volume of traffic available on account of the natural advantages of such waterway, which would be the shortest and deeper water route from the head of the Great Lakes to the sea board for largest Lake vessels, and the probable length of the open navigation season through this waterway.

“ 5. Traffic of the Great Lakes; how it reaches the sea board. The percentage of Canadian traffic handled through United States ports, and causes for this diversion.

“ 6. Lake transportation; rates that obtain; Lake and rail rates as against all rail rates; also a comparison with an all water route rate; also a comparison between the proposed Georgian Bay Ship Canal route and all the competing routes in existence and in course of construction, and their capacity; comparative cost of transportation per ton mile, rail, Lake and rail and all water.

“ 7. A comparison of the volume of traffic that may be handled by water as against the rail routes within the same period. Possible economic advantages of such a waterway.

“ 8. The position of the North-West; Fort William and Port Arthur being the objective point of all lines running through the wheat belt. How the situation at the head of the Lakes would be ameliorated; would an all water route from Fort William to the sea board, for largest Lake vessels, be the natural complement of the present water and rail routes?

“ 9. The position of the existing and projected Gulf Lines via Galveston, what their influence would be regarding diversion of traffic from the Lakes and St. Lawrence route. The effect upon the movement of the traffic by the opening of the Hudson Bay, and Pacific and Panama routes.

“ 10. The conditions that exist at the Atlantic sea boards, Canadian, and United States, as to handling traffic, and as to ocean and insurance rates.

“ 11. Inter-provincial trade. The facilitating of trade between the Provinces. The North-West to supply Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces with wheat at a cheaper transportation rate; Ontario and Quebec to supply in return the product of their manufactures, whilst it will perhaps be possible for Nova Scotia to supply coal to some Ontario points at a cheaper freight rate than it now costs to bring it from the United States, effecting a great saving to the country.

W.L. Mackenzie King Papers
Memoranda & Notes

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