

So that part of Canada which is bounded by the waters of the St. Lawrence system between Lake Superior and Detroit and eastward, forms a wedge into American territory. The Canadian shore forms two sides of a triangle. A ship, therefore, in sailing from Fort William to go to Montreal, has to go as deeply as the wedge into American territory and then come back into Canadian territory; whereas the same ship, if it could go by the way of the Georgian bay and the Ottawa river, would go almost in a bee line. In fact, the distance by the St. Lawrence between Fort William and Montreal is a little over 1,200 miles; whereas the distance between the same two points by way of the Georgian bay and Ottawa river is only about 950 miles. So that practically there is a saving by the Georgian Bay route of one-quarter the distance by the St. Lawrence route. This alone is enough to induce us to go on with this work. The advantage of the Ottawa route is so natural, so obvious, that in the early times of the colonies, when the only trade between the East and the West was the fur trade, the only route which was followed by the fur traders was the route of the Ottawa river and Georgian bay. There were not then the same requirements in navigation that there are now, but the reasons are as obvious to-day in favour of the Ottawa system over the St. Lawrence system as they were in those days. So when the Ottawa-Georgian bay system is completed, as it must be ultimately, we will effect a considerable saving in freight charges.

There is, I am aware, the question of speed. Can we maintain the same rate of speed over river navigation as we can maintain over lake navigation? I do not believe that anybody will pretend that we can have the same speed over the river navigation as over lake navigation. From the moment a vessel enters a river system like the Ottawa it will be impossible for her to maintain the same speed that she maintains on the Great Lakes. But it must be observed that both the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa are partly lake and partly river. I am prepared to admit that there is more of river navigation on the Ottawa system than upon the St. Lawrence system, and that to that extent the Ottawa system may not be as advantageous as the St. Lawrence system. But that question is not of such moment as to be a factor. I am prepared to admit that, in a comparison of cost of carrying freight on the two routes the St. Lawrence system may have this advantage

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier.]

of having less river navigation than the Ottawa system; but still I maintain that the difference, while it is appreciable, is not such as to be a factor against the Ottawa system. I have therefore to urge the desirability of developing, as rapidly as possible, the Ottawa system.

It may be seen, by the tenor of my remarks, that I approve the system in a wholly commercial spirit, without any captious disposition at all. I am simply pointing out to the Government what seems to be the pressing necessity of the day, that is to say, the development of the Ottawa system as soon as possible. I am so confident of the future of the country that I have no hesitation in saying that none of the resources which nature has given us in the way of transportation can be neglected, that every possible advantage of that kind should be improved. Nature has provided us with two outlets from the West, one by the St. Lawrence and the other by the Ottawa river. Both of them are needed to carry on the enormous development which must take place in the West. The West has been settled for only a few years; we have not yet one-fiftieth of the available soil under cultivation, but last year the wheat crop alone was about two hundred million bushels. Therefore, if the country continues to develop as it has developed, the agricultural products alone which will come from the prairie provinces will reach almost fabulous figures. If that be so, I repeat that it is not enough to have only one system; we require the two systems. It is in view of these circumstances that I bring this question to the attention of the House. My motion is simply a motion for papers. I do not ask for anything else at the present than the production of the papers which have been presented to the Government, with the correspondence that has taken place on the subject; and I hope that the Government will tell us at this date what policy they intend to pursue upon this very important question.

Mr. P. E. LAMARCHE (Nicolet): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) and myself have had similar motions on the Order Paper for several weeks past. It was my intention, as was announced in the press, to speak on my motion to-day, but as my right hon. friend has pressed his motion, I shall speak now.

In a few days from now a large delegation, representing over three hundred public