

Inland Navigation and the Upbuilding of Canada.

It requires no vivid imagination to visualize the part water transportation has played in the upbuilding of Canada. The railroads which have linked the Atlantic to the Pacific in a bond of steel, have assisted tremendously in settling the widely distributed agricultural regions of this continent, but without Canada's water highway to the sea, the railroads would have found it physically impossible alone to have carried the burden.

We all know, for instance, that the railroads could not attempt to move the grain crops of the West if it were not for the huge part played in this movement by the fleet of grain carriers on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, which carry the greater portion of Canada's annual grain crop from the Head of the Lakes to tidewater, or from the Head of the Lakes to the various ports of Georgian Bay.

The carriage of coal from the various ports of Lake Erie to both Eastern and Western Canada is rendered economical and expeditious through water transportation, for it is the boats that bring down Canada's grain, that take back the coal which is so essential to the industrial life of the Prairie Provinces.

Supremacy of Montreal Now Threatened.

Montreal for some years has been the acknowledged grain port of North America, but to retain her position heroic measures will be essential. Faced by acute competition from all American North Atlantic ports, she will have to be accorded the unstinted cooperation of the country if she is to guard for Canada the trade and commerce that rightfully are hers.

There are certain defined laws in transportation as in all other spheres of human activity that while not immutable are difficult of change, and this is particularly the case where the controlling factor is cost. And cost is the crux of the present grain transportation situation of Canada.

Formerly, the Port of Montreal, in spite of the then much higher rates of insurance applying to ships in the St. Lawrence trade, has no difficulty in meeting competition from the Port of New York, even though the rate to continental ports was frequently from two to three cents a bushel higher, but since then the rates on the State Barge commonly called the Erie Canal have been very materially reduced, and even though the marine insurance situation has been largely adjusted, Montreal is unable to compete with America's chief port on even terms, and it is only when the 1,250,000-bushel capacity of the Erie Canal has been reached that she can attract large cargoes.