

and all our trade, with much of that from the south shores of lake Erie, would thereby be secured to us.

The Board considers it unnecessary to enter into any minute examination of the importance of canal navigation, in advancing the prosperity of a nation. The history of other countries, and particularly of the great Empire to which we belong, amply demonstrates the fact.—Seventy years ago, England was without a single canal; and, from her insular position, numerous streams, and easy land communication, inland navigation was considered unnecessary. But since that time, what a change has taken place! The whole country is intersected with canals, which, passing in every direction, like arteries in the human system, circulate the life-tide of her prosperity from London to the extremities of the island.

The total length of navigable canals in England alone, now exceeds two thousand five hundred miles, in the construction of which, upwards of twenty-five millions of pounds sterling have been expended. Our neighbours in the State of New York are imitating her great example, having in the space of four years completed one canal of sixty-five miles long, connecting Lake Champlain with the Hudson, at an expense of upwards of £200,000, and more than half completed another of much greater length, intended to connect Lake Erie with the same point. Both these canals have been undertaken with the intention of leading towards New York, that commerce which was destined by nature, to the Gulf of St. Lawrence; and ought we to remain inactive until she has gained her point? Should we not rather exert ourselves to retain the advantages we possess by improving them to the extent of which they are capable?

To the superficial enquirer the ability of the Province to execute a work of this magnitude, may seem doubtful, and some may be disposed to question the policy of investing in such an undertaking so large a portion of its funds. The Commissioners are, however, of opinion, and doubt not that they will be able, on another occasion, to shew the practicability of effecting this great object, viz. sloop-navigation from lake Huron to the sea, an object which ought never to be lost sight of, as its completion will not only create a fund which will probably, at no very distant day, redeem the capital invested, with interest, and yield a large annual revenue to the Province, but will also extend our commerce and population, multiply the resources of the vast interior country, strengthen the connection of this colony with the parent state, and promote the prosperity of its inhabitants.

By the accounts which accompany this Report, the expenses of the survey, and certain contingencies of the Board, will be seen. These are greater than were contemplated, but they were unavoidable. A considerable part of the appropriation is, however, still unexpended, and this, from the experience acquired by the Board, will be more economically applied in future. An additional grant will, however, be necessary to enable them to complete the survey of the Lower Routes, and this, they hope, will be cheerfully accorded. To withhold the necessary funds for completing this important survey, would render useless the exertions which have been made, and destroy the hopes and anxious expectations of the Province.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

(SIGNED)

ROBERT NICHOL, *Vice Pres't.*
JAMES GORDON,
CHARLES JONES.

York, 15th February, 1823.