

ST. CLAIR AND ERIE SHIP CANAL.

The announcement that the St. Clair and Erie Ship Canal Company will begin operations in the early fall is of much interest to shippers and others interested in lake traffic. The canal has been known on paper for about two years, and the stock has been sold in Canadian cities and in London. The company only waits for certain promised legislation in the Provincial Parliament to begin the work of excavation. The canal is known in detail, less to New Yorkers than to the people of Cleveland, Buffalo, Detroit, and the western lake cities. By lake shippers it is looked upon as an important link in the deep-channel system which is to aid commerce considerably, and it is hoped, extend it, by means of a ship-canal, to the seaboard.

The St. Clair and Erie Ship Canal is to cross the Canadian Peninsula which lies between the two lakes. The canal is to extend in a straight line from a point opposite the "St. Clair flats," to a point on Lake Erie, which is in a direct line as the crow flies to Cleveland. It is to have a length of thirteen miles, and the dredged channel in Lake St. Clair to its entrance will be nineteen miles in length. This will give a total length of thirty-two miles, as against one hundred and eleven miles over the course now in use by the lake-carrying trade, through the Detroit River. The building of the thirteen miles of canal proper is said by engineers, who have examined the plans, to be a matter of comparative ease.

Borings have shown that there is no rock within several feet of the level of the bottom of the canal as planned. It will be a straight cut through blue clay of great firmness, and can be accomplished under the most favorable circumstances. The canal will be seventy-two feet wide on the bottom. The

sides will slope in the ratio of two to one, making the water surface 156 feet, with a depth of thirty-one feet. There will be a berm, three feet wide, five feet above the water. Turnouts or "gates," will be provided, besides ample space at each end. The estimate of the engineers for the total cost of the canal—\$5,519,629—is alleged to be a conservative one.

Through the Detroit River at present, passes almost the entire traffic of the lakes, the only notable exception being that between Lake Superior and the ports on Lake Michigan. In 1890 the tonnage registered at American ports passing through the Detroit River both ways was 21,684,000 tons, in 1893 it was 23,001,889 tons, and in 1895, 26,165,000 tons. This year it is estimated that it will certainly increase to 30,000,000 tons. Many of the large ship-building firms are now pressing the work of building large vessels. An order given during the present month was for four of the largest boats ever built for fresh-water service, each more than 500 feet in length, and with a gross tonnage of 8,000 tons. The estimates of the canal projectors are that 20,000,000 tons will prefer to pass through the canal, and upon this basis they fix the income in tolls at \$660,000.

Two years will be consumed in building the canal. It will be crossed by four existing railways, which will necessitate that number of draw-bridges, and three other bridges will be required for highways. As the difference in level between the two lakes is only three feet, no locks will be needed, but there will be a guard gate at the St. Clair end, for use during construction, and afterwards when repairs are necessary. The entrance from Lake St. Clair is shallow, and to obtain a twenty-one foot channel through the lake three miles of dredging will be necessary. At the Lake

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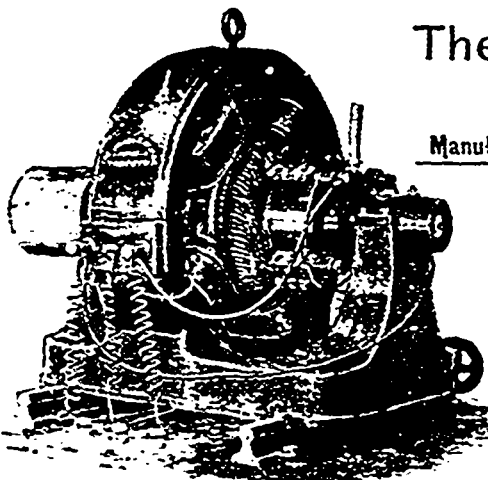
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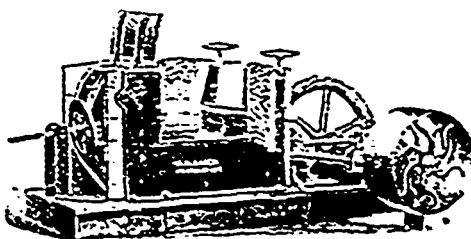
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