

an outlay of money which the inhabitants of the cultivated portions of this colony, with so many alluring schemes of improvement at their doors, will probably be reluctant to incur in a remote wilderness—and that too principally for the benefit of other communities. Be this, however, as it may, and setting aside the consideration of merely local projects, we have before us the St. Lawrence in the whole sweep of its majestic course, the mightiest artery of this vast continent. Chiefly in the possession of England, this fine River, expanding into a succession of inland seas, gives her the power of extending at pleasure and almost without limit, the market for her merchandise. Within a very short space of time, the country drained by this river will contain millions of inhabitants, nearly all indeed with a taste for British manufactures, and possessing ample means of gratifying that taste. Shall then the trade of countries about to teem with such masses of people be preserved to its natural outlet, or be diverted through artificial channels formed by the labour and enterprise of the States of the American Union, to any others? It is a stirring spectacle that is exhibited by the States of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, each with a fine spirit of commercial ambition and invincible enterprise, constructing lines of internal communication for the purpose of attracting to their busy Atlantic Cities, the trade of the countries bordering on the great lakes. But the natural emporium of those immense regions is situated at the foot of the rapids of the St. Lawrence—and it intimately concerns both the Canadas, even more than it does England, to emulate the zeal for commercial advancement displayed by our neighbors, and meet them with countervailing energy and spirit.

At present the navigation from Lake Erie to tide-water in Lower Canada, is subject to the control of not less than four distinct authorities.

1st. The Welland Canal connecting Lake Erie with Lake Ontario is in the hands of a chartered company.

2nd. The St. Lawrence Canal of Upper Canada, designed to facilitate the navigation between Johnstown and Lake St. Francis, is in the hands of Provincial Commissioners.

3rd. The small locks at Coteau-du-Lac and the Cascades in Lower Canada, are in the hands of the Military authorities.

4th. The Lachine Canal, overcoming the difficulties of the navigation at the rapids of St. Lewis is in the hands of commissioners of the Province of Lower Canada.

Now it is evident that if, instead of these four distinct and independent boards with as many distinct and separate sets of regulations and rates of toll, one general board were constituted for the superintendence of the whole, there would be every reason to expect that the canals would be managed more advantageously for the public interests and in a manner more likely to meet, with effect, that strenuous competition, which the active and enterprising character of our neighbors should prepare us to look for.

If this view of the subject be just, our obvious course then, will be, to spare no effort in accomplishing the union of these separate interests, under one efficient administrative board. For this purpose a kind of Joint Stock Company might be formed to consist of three partners, viz. Great Britain, Lower Canada, and Upper Canada, each of which might hold a certain given amount of capital stock, on which dividends of the proceeds of tolls should be paid in proportion to the vested interests of the respective parties. Each partner might appoint two commissioners for the management of the canals, and all of the commissioners should be resident inhabitants of Canada, connected with it by the possession of real estate and other causes of attachment. The six members of the board thus nominated might elect a seventh, and the president should then be chosen by a majority of votes, and be bound at a reasonable salary, to devote his whole time and ability to the duties of his station. Effectual and harmonious legislation by the three parties to this project would of course be essential to its success, and to the purchase of the vested interests, along the whole course of the navigation that might be effected by its adoption.

These are in substance my opinions respecting the policy to which circumstances appear to me to call the present attention of these Colonies, if they desire to retain the advantages which nature, by the configuration of the continent, bounteously designed for them. Whether it be really practicable, or whether some plan more judicious might not be devised, I respectfully leave it to the better judgment of the Legislature to consider and determine.

Besides the reference to Arbitrators of questions connected with the improvement of the River St. Lawrence, the 30th section of Geo. IV, holding it proper that, "the productions of Upper Canada should be permitted to be exported without being made subject by any act of the Province of Lower Canada, either directly or indirectly to duties or impositions, on their arrival in that Province or in passing through the waters thereof"—enacts, "that all and every the boats, scows, rafts, cribs and other craft belonging to any of His Majesty's subjects, and coming from the Province of Upper Canada into the Province of Lower Canada, not laden with the productions of any foreign country, shall be allowed freely to pass into and through the said Province, and shall not be subject to any rate, tax, duty, or imposition, other than any charge which may now exist for pilotage, or which may now be established for toll of any lock or other work now actually erected on the navigable waters thereof, any law, statute, or usage of the Province of Lower Canada to the contrary notwithstanding."