

CANADIAN IMPROVEMENTS—In Canada the first comprehensive idea of an outlet to the ocean came from William Hamilton Merritt. In 1818 his flouring mill at St. Catharines was without a sufficient supply of water. The floods of Lake Erie towered several hundred feet above him. He conceived the notion of drawing power for his mill from that source. Out of that conception grew the plan for a ship-canal. English and American engineers told him the project was possible, but to carry it out would bankrupt a nation. He was caricatured as a fool or lunatic, and when he issued his prospectus the public was cautioned to wait for greater things, as "Merritt's next project would be a canal to the planet Mars."

But he was undaunted, and, forming a private company, raised a considerable portion of his first fund in New York City and turned the first sod on November 30, 1824. After eleven years of ceaseless labor, he completed at once a waterpower and a canal, the first actual opening of navigation between the great lakes toward the Atlantic ocean, locking down 326 feet.

INEVITABILITY OF OPPOSITION—There has been equal opposition to all other considerable transportation projects. When the subject of a land-grant by the United States to the state of Michigan to aid in constructing locks around the Falls of St. Mary was being discussed in congress, Henry Clay summoned the forces of his unlimited dramatic ability to ridicule the project. He said it was like "squandering the public money on chimeras beyond the domain of civilization or the moon." Nevertheless the grant was made, the canal constructed and subsequently several times enlarged until now it presents the most massive locks and accommodates the greatest gateway commerce of the world.

De Lesseps was tantalized and harried for years after he began to advocate the feasibility of the Suez canal,* yet he cut a continent in twain, made India an exporter of breadstuffs to compete with America and created forever a new route for the commerce of more than half the globe.

• **SOURCES OF OPPOSITION**—Hostility to the present enterprise has been less violent, but more wide-spread, than that toward

*NOTE—History discloses that, 3200 years before there had been projected an artificial waterway connecting the Mediterranean and Red Seas, the construction of which was abandoned by Sesostris after sacrificing 120,000 lives; continued by the great Persian monarch Darius and completed by Ptolemy II, founder of the Alexandrian library—a channel 40 feet in depth, with gates and sluices, which was in use during many centuries.