

length proposed, and they are to be forty-five feet wide.

Major General Gascoigne—That is excellent; nothing could be better. I feel perfectly sure that you would never regret the construction of such a canal. It would be of vast importance.

The Chairman—You recollect that this Rideau canal was built a great many years ago, with that object in view, by the Imperial authorities.

Major General Gascoigne—Yes.

The Chairman—And if it was necessary then, do you consider it is equally necessary now?

Major General Gascoigne—Much more necessary now, from many points of view which I think it would not be prudent for me to state here publicly, if you will just take what I have said from a strategic point of view. I cannot speak too highly of the value of this projected canal. I think it would be wise for me not to go into details because I do not know how far my statements might be repeated abroad.

Hon. Mr. Power—You may take for granted that they would be stated as widely as possible.

Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell: And exaggerated.

Major General Gascoigne: I should like to confine my statements to the vast importance of the project, as I look at it.

Mr. Stewart: Sir John Michel, who commanded Her Majesty's forces here in 1866, and Admiral Hope, Commander of the squadron, went over this route the whole way by canoes and other ways, and when they came back they reported at a meeting held in Montreal that this canal was not only a commercial but a great military necessity for Canada. Are you of the same opinion?

Major General Gascoigne: I am.

The Chairman: Do you know the opinion of the military authorities in England?

Major General Gascoigne: I do, it would be looked upon with the utmost pleasure at home if this scheme were carried out.

Hon. Mr. Power: I take it that it is chiefly from the naval point of view. Since that time of which Mr. Stewart speaks, 1866, two railways have been built connecting the Ottawa river with lake Huron and of course for the purpose of transporting troops, for instance, the canal would not be nearly as useful or valuable. It is valuable now chiefly as a means of getting ships through.

The Chairman: And munitions of war.

Hon. Mr. Power: They could be carried through by train. You would not think that it is very necessary to have this canal for the purpose of moving troops east or west?

Major General Gascoigne: Of course it would be a most admirable thing even from that point of view.

Hon. Mr. Power: But considering the fact that there are two railways running from Ottawa to lake Huron, do you think the canal would be largely used for transporting troops in case there was any difficulty and it became necessary to move troops?

Major General Gascoigne: It was not the movement that I had in mind chiefly.

The Chairman: But it would serve a purpose in that respect?

Major General Gascoigne: Most unquestionably it would serve the purpose, but there are greater purposes than that which I have in mind.

The Chairman: I suppose you could not

have a route more remote from the frontier for transportation than this Ottawa route?

Major General Gascoigne: Certainly not, and it is just for that purpose that I consider it important.

The reasons given by General Gascoigne in favour of the Georgian Bay canal, from a military point of view, are, it seems to me, elementary and full of common sense, and I am sure the Minister of Militia, who is known to be well versed in military matters, holds similar views on the subject, and therefore cannot help being an ardent supporter of the proposed enterprise. But besides these advantages, in time of peace as well as in time of war, there is another economical reason to induce us to construct a waterway on Canadian territory. We would keep undivided for our own benefit all the traffic going from west to east, and the greatest portion of the western export trade, while by the international route to the south every American port constitutes a leak-hole through which our grain productions are lost to the Canadian commerce.

Basing our calculations on the total shipments of Canadian grain from Fort William and Port Arthur, as furnished by the grain statistics compiled by the Department of Trade and Commerce, we find that our grain was shipped to American ports during the past few years in the following proportion: In 1906, 32 per cent; in 1907, 26 per cent; in 1908, 1909 and 1910, 30 per cent; in 1911, 37½ per cent, and in 1912, 40 per cent. We lost the advantage of carrying in Canadian bottoms, in Canadian channels, to Canadian terminal points, these millions of bushels of wheat and other grains, on account of our stagnant policy in matters of water transportation and of waterway improvements. Moreover, canal statistics compiled by the Department of Railways and Canals show that, in 1911, 93 per cent of the total traffic which passed through the Sault Ste. Marie canals were carried by American vessels, and that only 7 per cent was carried by Canadian vessels.

It has been said and written that all the grain of the West has to be shipped every year from the end of harvest to the close of navigation, that is to say, during the months of September, October, November and December, and that, consequently, during the other months of the year a fleet of steamers travelling east and west by the Georgian bay canal would remain idle. I will demonstrate later that the traffic through the Georgian Bay canal will con-