

In the whole distance from Lac des Mille Lacs to the Lake of the Woods, there would be no great length of canal at any one place. The navigation would be through deep lakes with short rapids or falls, where locks would be required, between them, except on Rainy River, a stretch of 80 miles, where there is, in some places, a strong current and at one place (the Long Sault) a rapid which requires improvement. Rainy River is a large stream fed by the drainage of 30,000 square miles of territory where the rainfall is such as to have given the river the very appropriate name it bears.

The lake of the Woods is, in round numbers, at an elevation of some 320 feet above Lake Winnipeg, and the distance between the two is, by the Winnipeg River, about 147 miles, but whether it would be better to follow this great River, or strike across from the Lake of the Woods to the Red River, is a question requiring consideration.

The Winnipeg River presents, in its general character, a series of lake expansions, separated by falls and rapids, but in one section, known as the White River or Seven Portages, it is very rough, and at high water is impracticable even to the voyageurs. The waters of the English River and the Winnipeg are here combined, and their united volume, gathered from sixty thousand square miles of territory, pours over the declivities of the Seven Portages in a tumbling sea of foam, hemmed in by rocks.

No engineer would tackle such a place without the resources of a nation at his back. But, fortunately, nature has at this, the worst and wildest part of the Winnipeg, provided a by-route with stretches of river smooth as mill ponds, separated by short rapids, where the construction of locks would be practicable. This by-route is called the Pinawa. It breaks off from the main channel at Otter Falls, some distance above the seven portages, and rejoins it twenty miles lower down at Lac du Bonnet. From Bonnet Portage to the mouth of the Winnipeg at Fort Alexander, there are several falls, and an occasional angry looking rapid, but the difficulties are not insurmountable and, once at Lake Winnipeg, there is smooth sailing for three hundred miles to the mouth of the Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan, with occasional intervals of shallow water, where deepening and, perhaps, in some cases, locks might be required, is navigable to vessels of moderate draught to the precincts of the Rocky Mountains. With its numerous navigable branches extending for hundreds of miles through a fine agricultural country, underlaid, as it is reported and proved to be, by inexhaustible coal fields, the improvement of the navigation of this great River of the West, is a matter of the first importance.

But to return to the Lake of the Woods, whether it would be better to go by the Winnipeg River or strike across for a distance of some eighty miles to the Red River at some point at or near the city of Winnipeg, is the question to be considered. The Lake of the Woods, on its west side, at Buffalo Bay, seems to be, as it were, brimming over; the land rises but little above its level and so flat and low is the country