

period did the United Kingdom have sufficient stocks of wheat and flour for more than seven weeks' consumption, and that frequently the stocks had fallen as low as two weeks' consumption. It was suggested by certain military authorities that warehouses or granaries should be erected in various parts of the United Kingdom for the storage of six or twelve months' supply of food stuffs. In 1903 Mr. Theo. V. S. Angier, F. S. S., in a paper which he read before the City of London Tradesmen's Club on the subject of England's food supply in time of war, dealt with the question of the establishment of such warehouses or granaries, and showed the enormous cost that this would entail on the Imperial exchequer. He said:

"Contemplate for a moment what the storage of twelve or even six months' supplies of corn would mean. We imported, according to the Board of Trade returns, 192½ million cwt. corn, flour and meal in the whole year 1901, or 98½ million cwt. for six months, at a cost of £30,000,000. Calculating interest at 4 per cent. per annum, warehouse rent and charges according to Dock Tariffs, and we have the annual expense of over £5,000,000 to keep this six months' store of wheat and flour. But if storage be necessary or advisable as a preparation, it is not reasonable to suppose that bread-stuffs would be sufficient; we should with equal reason require to keep like stores of eggs, animals, meat, rice, sugar, tea and tobacco, as necessaries, and six months' imports of these articles came to £46,000,000 in 1901. Interest on this sum would represent £1,840,000 per annum, rent and charges and loss in deterioration another £1,500,000. Thus a storage for six months of the ordinary necessities of life would entail an annual charge of some £8,000,000 to say nothing of the disorganization of trade by introducing the Government as a large dealer. Or if, as would be more reasonable, the Government paid a premium to traders and farmers for storing, bonding and stacking the six to twelve months' supplies, the cost would be equally great. Would the country face such a burden added to its already heavy weight of taxation? I doubt it, more especially as the necessity for it cannot be proved."

The adoption of a grain route via Newfoundland, which I have outlined, would entirely obviate the necessity for such an

expenditure, because a continuous train service from the Canadian North West via Belle Isle tunnel, and on to Great Britain would bring abundant supplies within three days' steam of England.

The question of tunnelling the Straits of Belle Isle opens up a still broader view of the outlet for the wheat supplies of the great North West,—the cheapening of its cost of export as well as its safety in transfer. Mr. T. C. Davis, M.P., for Saskatchewan, said at Ottawa in March, 1902:—

"What we want is a continuous line of railway which can be operated twelve months in the year, and double-tracked, if necessary. Last year, 400,000 people in the North West produced 1,000,000 bushels of grain. We are going to get people in there at the rate of 100,000 per year, and in eight or ten years the production of that country will be increased to 400,000,000 or 500,000,000 bushels. Wheat will have to be carried to the seaboard, and that cannot be done over our canals when they are frozen over six months in the year. What we want is to be able to put our wheat in the car and run it through to the seaboard. Then we have to take into account the depreciation in the value of the wheat and the charges for interest and insurance if it has to be stored over during the winter, which amount to at least six cents per bushel. There is also this further point to be considered. If we have to depend wholly upon our canals we will have to store an immense quantity of wheat in the elevators at the head of Lake Superior, and when navigation opens in the spring and we throw that on the markets of the world, down goes the price, so that our farmers will be out not only by the loss in storage and insurance, but also by the depreciation in value on account of such an immense quantity being thrown in the market. What we want is a continuous line of railway from the West to some ocean port."

This is precisely what the Belle Isle tunnel in connection with the Newfoundland short line scheme would provide.

It is Sometimes Said That Railways Can Never Compete

for freight with water carriage, but the great Northern Railway gave an undertaking to the Dominion Government in