

THE WELLAND DEVELOPMENT IS CAPABLE OF MUCH EARLIER COMPLETION THAN THE GEORGIAN BAY CANAL.

Some five or six years have been consumed in making surveys and in preparing exact estimates, plans and other details, for letting the contract of the Welland Canal, a development which is only some twenty-five miles in length and is in a settled and accessible country. No such exact details are compiled and ready for the letting of contracts for the Georgian Bay Canal. This canal, as projected, is some 58 miles in length. In its course, it is necessary first to lock 100 feet up and then some 500 or 600 feet down; and there are innumerable rock cuttings, serpentine in character, with forty-five dams to be constructed and planned, and even many more in contemplation. Undoubtedly it would be the work of many years to complete the plans for actual construction of many parts of this project; and ten years is given as the least possible time in which construction could be completed. Time as well as money is generally under-estimated in works of this kind, particularly in a wild, largely unknown country such as would be crossed by the Georgian Bay Canal. In view of the state of preparation and the difference in the nature of the country traversed by the respective canals, it is a conservative estimate that an improved Welland Canal could be built and in operation in one half to one-third of the time required for the completion of the Georgian Bay Project.

TIME IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE.

Canada has been playing with the question of water transportation, while the State of New York and the United States at Panama have been on the job. As a result, in the pending solution of this national problem, time has become for us a matter of the utmost importance. Within a brief interval our country will face, in the East as well as West, a keener competition in trade routes than she has ever hitherto experienced.

The improved Erie Barge Canal, suitable for three thousand ton barges and reducing the cost of transportation from Buffalo to New York by approximately one-half, will be ready for operation within two years; and it will afford advantages with which the present Welland Canal and the St. Lawrence cannot possibly compete. Such a trade route, once established, will be hard to dislodge. Is it conceivable that the national sense of the people of Canada will be content to see practically all the enormous products of our western country, as well as those of the United States, transported through this barge canal to New York, when our great national highway of the St. Lawrence invites the natural transportation by that route to Europe?

Within the same interval of two years the Panama Canal will also be in operation; and this canal, in conjunction with tunnels and other improvements with respect to grades, etc., on our western railways, is expected to draw trade from as far east as Moose Jaw. By the plan suggested in this paper, however, of barge canals from Edmonton to Port Arthur and an ocean waterway from Port Arthur to the Atlantic, the full effect of the Panama competition in diverting Canadian traffic westward, would be confined practically to the section west of the Rockies; while, in a large neutral belt east of the Rockies the residents would reap a distinct benefit. They would have two optional routes, much to the advantage of the great producing province of Saskatchewan and of a large part of Alberta.