

publics of South America on the Pacific coast and to Mexico and California, with all of which a large trade could be developed in the exchange of Canadian manufactures for the tropical and subtropical products of these countries.

4. As the West India islands, most probably Jamaica, would become a coaling station for vessels en route to the west, an additional market would be supplied for the coal mines of Nova Scotia, for which return cargoes to Canada would be readily obtained in the abundant produce of these islands.

A very important advantage to Canada not to be omitted would be the advantage of the Panama route in relieving the railway transportation of the enormous wheat products of the western provinces. So rapid has been the production of wheat, and so brief the period for transportation to the Canadian ports on Lake Superior, that it is doubtful whether even with three transcontinental railways this congestion can be fully relieved at all times. Should the western wheat fields produce, as it is expected, four or five hundred million bushels, within the next five or ten years, the loss to the farmers by delay in being relieved of their grain, would be even greater than it is at present. An outlet, therefore, by way of Vancouver to Liverpool via the Panama canal is of the greatest importance, and I believe not impracticable. For instance, Calgary is 616 miles nearer Vancouver than it is to Fort William, the nearest shipping point on the east. Fort William is closed to navigation within two or three months of the harvesting of the western wheat, while Vancouver is open all the year round. If the route from Edmonton to Vancouver is adopted, the saving in distance would be 716 miles as against Fort William. At the close of navigation of the upper lakes, the nearest sea port to the west is St. Johns, a distance of 2,393 miles from Moosejaw, about the centre of the western wheat fields. If shipped west by way of Vancouver, the distance would be only 1,085 miles. Even if the freight rates by way of Liverpool were not less than the route by which western grain now reaches European markets, and it is confidently expected they would be, the relief from congestion, which is likely to prevail, would, in itself, greatly benefit the

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farmers of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

In an interview at Ottawa, Sir Richard McBride, Premier of British Columbia, said:

Preparing for Panama Canal.

The persistently reiterated statements that the movement of Canadian export wheat via Vancouver and the Panama canal will not be practicable are unworthy of notice. I can say officially that it is within my knowledge that elevator men of the largest responsibility are planning for the construction of vast grain elevators on the Pacific coast to take care of the expected grain export trade which the completion of the Panama canal will bring over our way.

In view of these advantages to commerce, it becomes the settled policy of the two nations more immediately concerned in the construction of the Panama canal, viz., the United States and Great Britain, that the territory through which the canal passed should be neutralized and that, no matter what country possessed the sovereignty of the soil, so far as the canal was concerned, 'all nations' should be permitted to use it on terms of 'equality.' The first nation to make a declaration, so far as I can ascertain, to that effect, was the United States. In 1826 a Congress of the Independent States of Central America was held at Panama for the purpose of considering the construction of the canal between the two oceans. At this congress the United States was represented by invitation, but owing to the unsettled condition of Central American politics, nothing definite was accomplished. As indicating the attitude of the United States towards this project, it is interesting to quote from the instructions given by Henry Clay to the United States delegates:

'If the work should ever be concluded,' he said 'the benefits should not be exclusively appropriated to one nation, but should be extended to all ports of the globe upon payment of just compensation and reasonable tolls.'

The convention at Panama having failed, the United States Senate took up the question, and on March 2, 1835, adopted unanimously the following resolution:

Resolved, that the President of the United States be respectfully asked to consider the expediency of opening negotiations with the governments of other nations, and particularly with the government of Central America and New Granada, for the purpose of effectually protecting, by suitable treaty stipulations with them, such individuals or companies as may undertake to open a com-