

Such charges for telegraphing seriously handicap business men in their efforts to extend the trade of the town, and it is impossible being such a distance from eastern trade centres to get along without the liberal use of the telegraph wire, and to do this rates to Ontario points should not exceed 50 and 3c. and 80 and 2c., to Manitoba 25 and 2c. and others in the same proportion.

Since my last annual report the question of

THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE ST. LAWRENCE CANALS

has excited considerable interest and comment, not only from the press, but from the public men of this country. Since this board first took up the question, it has been discussed with more or less interest by other representative bodies. The improvement of the principal locks, excepting those of the Beauharnois Canal, is being proceeded with, it is true, but slowly, but even that is better than not at all. I regret that nothing has been done as yet in the way of improving the Beauharnois Canal, or constructing a new one to take its place, and as this is the largest uncompleted link in the system it will seriously retard the eventual completion of the much needed work.

From time to time newspaper reports say something of the intentions of the Government regarding it, but as yet their intentions have not materialized into actual work. It is time they did, and every effort should be put forth to have Parliament deal with this question and dispose of it. The enlargement and improvement of the canals will divert nearly the whole stream of western traffic to and from the seaboard by the St. Lawrence, and Montreal bids fair to be the most important of the Atlantic seaports of North America. Her citizens are at last awakening to the realization of this fact, and are grasping in their entirety the important questions of increased harbor accommodations, reduced port dues, and better facilities in every way for the increased traffic which must be theirs. For lack of sufficient canal accommodation Montreal has today to helplessly stand by and see American ports taking from her the import business of a large part of Canada, and almost all that of the Western States. The consequence is that outward bound ships demand and get higher rates of freight than from New York, and were it not for the great advantage which the St. Lawrence Canals, even with their limited capacity, possesses over the Erie system the Montreal ocean trade would be very light indeed. Improved canal accommodation means not only a general lowering of charges from Montreal to the centres of population on both sides of the great lakes, but an increased price received by the tiller of the soil for his products, and a decreased one paid by him for what he purchases.