

The Canadian Journal.

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On the formation of a Canal between Lakes St. Clair and Erie,

And the foundation of a Town and Harbour at the Mouth of the Two Creeks, in the Township of Romney, in connection with the establishment of an extensive system of Drainage, by which near a Million of Fertile Acres would be redeemed in one District. With an illustratory Map.

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(Concluded from page 303.)

To the foregoing descriptive sketches of the localities for both undertakings, (see August number of the "Canadian Journal," page 306,) I might have added further desultory remarks demonstrative of the great benefits sure to result from their successful accomplishment, as affecting not alone the immediately surrounding country, but the whole district, and even the Province at large; but, contenting myself with what had been advanced by Mr. Elliott, and the writer in the *Patriot*, I merely observed that, taking it for granted that all the advantages expected from the opening of the proposed canal would be realized, the first questions that would be asked would be: what should be the express nature of the canal? and, what would be the most economical way of executing the work? To which I would unhesitatingly reply, that, of course, it ought to be a *ship canal*; but that that involved two considerations, namely, whether, as proposed by Mr. Elliott, it should be only a simple cut *without locks*, which with a fall of between five and six feet in fifteen miles might perhaps be practicable, or whether it should be furnished with at least one lock at its southern extremity for at once moderating the current, which at particular seasons would doubtless be very rapid, and furnishing the village with a valuable permanent water-power for milling purposes, in a part of the country where such privileges are much required. Without, however, pretending to have investigated the probable results of either plan very closely, I was content to observe that I inclined to the latter plan, although the most expensive, as calculated to keep the waters in the canal under subjection; whereas, were they left to chance, as an open cut, it was not improbable that the current would in the course of a very short time scoop out a channel of far greater magnitude than might be desirable. Add to which, though I did not altogether acquiesce in Mr. Elliott's expectations of its lowering the surface of Lake St. Clair to the extent predicted by him, it was impossible to say what effect the uncontrolled expansion of such an outlet would produce on the present level of that lake. The expense of the undertaking also I had not attempted to estimate; but, considering the trifling lockage required and the supposed absence of all rocky obstructions, one might hazard a supposition, from a known rate of £3,000 per mile for a canal thirty feet wide and eight feet deep, that the whole expense of excavation would not much exceed £10,000, a sum very far short of the value of the rich lands that would thereby be reclaimed from a state of utterly unproductive, and, at times, even pestilential marsh!

In taking this cursory view of the subject I had, of course, confined myself to the formation of the canal alone, as a navigable channel of communication between the two lakes. It

now, however, became necessary to connect that branch of the undertaking with the proposed town and harbour at its southern termination. But, fortunately, that would involve very little additional expense; for, taking it for granted that the eligible character assigned to the *former* was correct, its rapid location by settlers would be sure to follow; and, therefore, the only obstacle to the successful formation of the *latter*, worth considering, would lie in the removal of the bar or sand-bank liable to form at the mouth of the creek. And even that need not detain us for a moment; for if such obstructions can be obviated elsewhere, and, as already mentioned, could here be so easily overcome in the course of a single night by scooping out a trifling channel with the hands, by way of amusement, what might not be expected to be accomplished by the permanent action of the current of the canal, guided between Piers at its exit into the lake!

Having thus supplied—what had been omitted by the Municipal Council—such data as I thought might reasonably justify the Government in authorising the Board of Works to undertake at least a *preliminary survey*, I refrained from saying more on that subject. But I could not help adding that being impressed with a conviction that very great public benefits would be derived from a scientific examination of the levels of *all the lake-shore Townships*, with a view to the institution of a regular system of Public Drainage, and the redemption thereby of hundreds of thousands, if not a million of acres of the richest land; and being of opinion that in a young and rising country like Canada, the general economy of harbours, bridges, and, though last, not least, *Public Drainage*, should be under the sole control of Government,* I trusted that I should not be deemed presumptuous, should I hereafter be led to draw the attention of the Government to that important subject, particularly as I was prepared to prove that in my own Township alone the application of a trifling sum in drainage would at once convert not less than 6,000 acres of the finest land from a state of waste marsh into smiling farms; and that, to my certain knowledge such was more or less the case in the whole of the other lake-shore Townships.†

* Such is the case with the harbours in the United States, without any reference to profit or otherwise, even to furnishing the funds from the *Federal* purse; and, I believe that some years ago Mr. Killaly also expressed a similar opinion, at the very time that, strange to say, the Bondeau was being abandoned by the Government to a private Company, because found to be unproductive. Whereas, had the Government been in the first instance content to construct a mere harbour of refuge, with a light-house at its mouth, and left the rest to futurity, they would have accomplished all that was wanted in such a situation, at half the expense incurred.

† In justice to the important public objects advocated, I now feel constrained to state, with all candor, that I was in due time honoured with an acknowledgement of the communication from which the foregoing details are extracted, conveying the Governor-General's thanks for my suggestions, and apprising me that the subject had been submitted to the Commissioner of the Board of Works; but that, unfortunately, that officer had expressed a very unfavourable, though *unofficial*, opinion respecting the Canal, which was transmitted for my information. *Conceiving such a mode of proceeding to be premature*—the sole object of the Municipal Council and myself being to obtain a *preliminary survey*, on which to establish further action or rejection—and the Canal alone being alluded to by the Commissioner, and some of my language even on that head appearing to have been inadvertently misunderstood, as well as misquoted, I felt bound to offer some further explanation, in the hope of so far setting matters right; as I should have regretted exceedingly that any blunders on my part respecting the Canal, should stand in the way of either the proposed Town and Harbour, or the drainage of so large a tract of valuable country. I accordingly lost no time in referring to the fact that instead of profess-