

The Trent Valley Route

"Now suppose we take * * the cost of transportation :—" We find that according "to Poor's Manual for 1896, * * the average rate received by the railways of the "United States per ton per mile for the transportation of freight averaged 8.21 mills. * * "We find that on the Erie canal the rate is very much less. Turn to the lakes. There at "the outlet of Lake Superior the records are kept very close, and in 1896 the average price "received for the transportation of freight, which went through the canals at the outlet of "Lake Superior, was ninety one-hundredths of one mill. We can state the fact broadly by "saying that in general the cost of deep water transportation is only about ONE-TENTH "THE AVERAGE COST OF RAIL TRANSPORTATION. During the same year according to a "statement made before a meeting of the Lake Carriers Association the average rate of "freight transportation on all the great lakes was only eighty-five one-hundredths of a mill, "and that *mainly because there was deeper water in some of the channels below than in the* "St. Mary's canal and some of the outlets in that neighborhood.

"Let us now find the ultimate limits of competition in order to discover the cheapest "known form of transportation. A careful series of experiments conducted on the G. T. R. "here in Canada, some years ago, showed that the actual net cost of transportation, that is "exclusive of interest on bonds, etc., was five mills per ton per mile. The average net cost "in 1896 on the railroads of the United States was somewhat larger than that, being nearly "six mills per ton per mile.

"Mr. James Hill, President of the great northern road, built some steamships. These "steamships are built to the full draught of water at the Sault. This was before the larger "canals were open. They carry 2700 tons of freight, and they make the run from Duluth to "Buffalo in three-and-a-half days and cost an average of \$120 per day. Now in round num- "bers the distance from Duluth to Buffalo is 1000 miles, and working that down we find "that the cost is fifteen-one thousandths of a cent per ton per mile. Turning that into "figures that business men understand * * we do on the great lakes for \$1.00 what it "costs the best situated railway in the United States \$27 to do. Therefore, without going "further into these figures you will agree with me in my conclusion that water transporta- "tion is the cheapest, and therefore if economy in transportation is the chief factor in "the prosperity of nations, that nation which enlarges its water ways and develops "them to the greatest possible extent will have done for its citizens, its producers and its "consumers alike, the very best which can be done. But we are not through with these "interesting matters. I find on the other side of the line that there has been sometimes "a question in the minds of some of us whether the people run the railroads or the railroads "run the people. I do not know, of course, whether you have any such questions over "here ; I merely wish to point out the fact that we have found, and we have the testimony