

The Montreal, Ottawa and Georgian Bay Canal.

The transportation problem is to the fore, and that particular phase of it which has come to be realized as being of paramount importance to vast sections of the northern part of this continent, one whose solution involves the destinies of our farming communities of the West, may be summed up in the form: How is the traffic of the great lakes best and most cheaply to reach the seaboard? Canadian statesmen early appreciated the fact that the only available natural water courses from the lakes to the sea lay wholly or in great part within their territory, and, realizing in some measure the magnitude of the traffic that must eventually seek an outlet along the best and cheapest way, have from time to time spent large sums in improving the navigation of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, with the view of retaining advantages so plainly possessed. The crying need of the grain-raising industry, after all is said and done, is not more rapid transportation, but lower cost of conveyance of its products. "He who can most cheaply reach the markets of the world can control the markets of the world." And if the farmers of the great American West and Canadian Northwest are to retain a foreign market for their surplus products, and are not to be hustled off and supplanted by their South American and other competitors, nothing can more concern them than to discover the very cheapest way of reaching that market. The increasing number of vessels ploughing those waters indicates the immense activities that are being set in motion year by year. According to the eleventh census reports, the tonnage of the American mercantile marine on the lakes increasing during 1886-90 from 634,652 tons to 826,360 tons; and while the estimated value of the vessels employed in 1886 was \$30,597,450, four years later, in 1890, it had almost doubled, amounting to \$58,128,500. This increased tonnage consisted entirely of steam propellers, of which there was constructed during the four years 96 under 1,000 tons, 50 between 1,000 and 1,500 tons, and 89 over 1,500 tons. In the year 1878, 1,091 vessels passed through the Sault canal, while in 1889 the number was 9,579, of which 6,587 were steamers. Dur-

ing little more than the same period the annual value of the traffic increased from \$53-413,472 to \$83,733,527. In 1856 the registered tonnage using the canal was 101,458 tons; 1889, 7,221,935 tons, the actual tonnage being about 300,000 tons more than that. For purpose of comparison it may be stated that in the latter year the total tonnage passing through the Suez canal, that great international highway between Europe and the East, was 5,903,024 tons, or only 80 per cent. of that using the Sault canal. The total tonnage of vessels engaged in the foreign trade entering the port of New York in 1887 was 6,074,543 tons, or only 84 per cent. of the traffic between Lake Huron and the remote Superior. It has been estimated that the saving in cost of transportation effected by the Sault canal up to 1889 over the same service performed by rail amounted to \$3000,000,000.

In his message last year ex-Gov. Flower asserted with regard to the late traffic: "In 1889 the tonnage is said to have been 10,000,000 greater than the combined entries and clearances of all the seaports of the United States and 3,000,000 greater than the combined entries and clearances of Liverpool and London." According to Rand & McNally's atlas of the world, the total ton mileage of freight carried on the great lakes in 1889 was 15,518,460,000 ton miles, being 22.6 per cent. of the total ton mileage (68,727,223,246) of all the railways in the United States for the year ending June 30, 1889. Upward of 250,000,000 bushels of grain and mill products reached Lake Erie in 1892. The question readily resolves itself into: What is the best practical waterway from the great lakes to the Atlantic? The proceedings at the World's Columbian Water Commerce Congress at Chicago in 1893 and at the Deep Waterways Convention at Toronto in 1894, the action of the New York legislature recently, and the various schemes submitted for their consideration; the activity of Canada in carrying to completion her deepening of the St. Lawrence system of canals, and last, but not least, the action of congress in authorizing the appointment of Commissioners to join a like number appointed by the Canadian government to discuss international waterways, all go to show a keen realization of the urgent necessity that exists for solving the question.

Of the waterways that have been pro-