

This fact of itself indicates not only what may reasonably be expected from enlarging the line of communication between Lakes Erie and Ontario, but to some extent what may be fairly anticipated from increasing the capacity of the Canals between Prescott and Montreal.

The St. Lawrence being the natural outlet of the great lakes, and the only route by which a channel can be formed, with a continuous descent connecting them with the ocean, the removal of all impediments to its safe, and fullest available navigation, should be a matter of the greatest solicitude to those through whose territory it passes.

It has been frequently, and doubtless truly stated, that the benefits resulting from commerce with foreign nations, or even between different parts of the same country, are not confined to the sale, purchase, or exchange of commodities; a large and profitable part of it being the actual carrying trade itself, besides other and numerous advantages which follow in its wake.

No stronger proof of a full belief in these statements can be found, than in the arguments of the originators of the Erie Canal, who constantly affirmed that the western trade should by no means be permitted to descend to Lake Ontario if it were possible to avoid it. They concluded with rare foresight that once on that level it would be likely to find its way through the St. Lawrence to the seaboard, and therefore judged that no pains or expense should be spared to establish a line of navigation direct from Lake Erie to the Hudson River.

These views are still held by many prominent men, and New York has consequently been always antagonistic to any canal scheme for uniting Lakes Erie and Ontario, even by a route through the territory of the United States.

If this trade is considered of so much importance by a shrewd, far-seeing people, ever alive to their own interests, there is good reason to believe that it would be at least equally beneficial to the people of Canada, to secure, and retain the control of it.

To enable this to be done, there can scarcely be a doubt but that the outlay required for the further improvement of the St. Lawrence route would be amply justified, especially as it is capable of being enlarged to such dimensions as would in all probability place it beyond the reach of successful competition.

On turning to the map of Canada it will be seen that the eastern extremity of Lake Erie, overlaps the west end of Lake Ontario, in such a manner as to leave only a comparatively narrow peninsula between them, the distance across which in a north and south direction is, at one point, barely 22 miles.

The Niagara River, forming the eastern side of this peninsula, as also the boundary line between the State of New York and Canada, falls about 324 feet from the upper to the lower lake in a distance of a little over 31 miles.

To the eastward of this river (American side) the space between the lakes increases rapidly, and the land is high, and continues for a long distance in a north-easterly direction without a break or ravine of any considerable extent occurring in it. No surveys made on that side have as yet led to any suitable route being found for a ship canal of the ordinary kind; and even if a practicable line were discovered, it is quite probable that the influence of eastern cities, as well as that of Buffalo, would prevent it being brought into use.