

The American vessels that ply on the Upper Lakes have been steadily increasing in size for some years past; for experience has proved that the larger class, especially the propeller, is the cheapest for the transport of grain and other heavy freight which seek water communications. The Welland Canal will only admit the smaller vessels, unless, indeed, those of greater tonnage are prepared to unload a considerable part of their cargo at Port Colborne, for transport by the Welland Railway, and then go through with the remaining portion. This transshipment at Port Colborne has, in fact, become an important feature of the trade in that section of the country. We learn from the latest report of the Minister of Inland Revenue that during the three months ending on the 30th of June, 1871, 133 vessels, carrying 78,425 tons of grain, transhipped the whole or a part of their cargo. Of these fifty transhipped the entire cargo—amounting to 24,037 tons. The remaining ninety-three transhipped so much as would enable them to pass the Canal with the remainder. These vessels drew from eleven feet six inches to twelve feet of water, whilst the Canal only admitted the passage of vessels drawing ten feet or less. When laden to twelve feet, their cargoes would vary from 19,000 to 24,000, and when drawing only ten feet from 14,000 to 18,500 bushels of wheat. To enable such as could otherwise pass the Canal to do so, they have transhipped from 300 to as much as 7,500 bushels. The vessels that transhipped their entire cargoes were too large for the locks, irrespective of the draught of water. The Canal Commissioners, in their report, dwell particularly on the inadequacy of the Welland to meet the necessities of Western traffic, and refer to the class of vessels that it should benefit. "The tendency in ship-building," say the Commissioners, "for the last quarter of a century on the Upper Lakes, has been to construct larger vessels every-way, whether propelled by steam or sail; while the screw is super-

seding the paddle everywhere on the lakes as well as on the ocean—the relative number and tonnage of screw steamers is gradually increasing upon the sailing craft. The Lake St. Clair Flats were in former years the accepted gauge of the navigation: but by the combined action of the Canadian and United States' Governments the obstacles in the lake have been so far removed that vessels can now pass through, drawing 14 feet. Then, again, as the line of navigation is extended, so the long voyage demands larger tonnage. As an approximate rule for the size of a vessel for any particular route, it has been observed that any vessel, to be properly adapted to its business, should have one ton of measurement for every mile of her voyage; and as an example, in illustration of the rule, it may be remarked that the vessels plying between Chicago and Buffalo, 916 miles, now range between 600 and 1,500 tons, while many persons of considerable experience in the trade are of opinion that a medium size of about 1,000 tons is best suited for this route."

It has been the universal sentiment of the country for some years past that the canal system should be improved at the earliest opportunity when the condition of the finances warranted the outlay that such improvements would necessarily entail. The Quebec Convention in 1865 passed a resolution to this effect—and the Government of the Dominion in 1870 appointed a Commission composed of practical business men of high standing in the country, to examine into the whole question of canal enlargement. Their Report has been for a twelve-month before the people of the Dominion, and has been generally considered as doing complete justice to the great interests involved. The government, in fact, have adopted the report as the basis of improvements which are to commence forthwith, and which comprise the enlargement of the St. Lawrence and Welland canals, so that the large propeller and other craft which are now confined to