

population of these territories comes to be counted by millions and tens of millions as in course of time it will be, all the railroads likely to be built would not suffice to carry their surplus productions to the ocean, at least, at such rates as would be satisfactory to agricultural communities, but through these wide regions nature has provided a highway, for cheap transportation, which can, at an outlay which the country might well bear, be rendered available.

The old route of the Fur Traders carried, in its day, the traffic of the Northern half of the continent. By it the manufactures of Europe, although not in very large quantity, reached the Rocky Mountains and the shores of the Arctic Seas. Nor did the old fur traders stop there but pushed their way over the Rocky Mountains and established trading posts on the Thompson and the Fraser. They placed ships, too, on the Pacific Ocean which served to carry their rich peltries to the populous shores of Asia, where they found a ready market and whence there came, in return, stores of silks and finery which enchanted the dusky maidens of plain and forest and led to a wonderful increase in the traffic. In the development of recent times history has repeated itself. On the Great Lakes, the fleets of commerce have replaced the birchen skiffs of the old voyageurs and Indians. Railways sweep over the valleys of the Saskatchewan and through the mountains of British Columbia, where the kilted Highlanders of the old Northwest Company so long held sway, and the little vessels which these same Highlanders placed on the Pacific Ocean, have in their stead, the magnificent steamers of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

All over the continent as well as on the ocean, the routes by which the fur traders first travelled are becoming the highways of commerce, and it could not be otherwise, for they were quick to discern and prompt to avail themselves of every natural advantage that land or sea presented.

Their main highway from Lake Superior to the prairies was by way of the Kaministiquia and the waters of Rainy River, along the line of communication, further opened soon after the acquisition of the Hudson's Bay Company's rights by Canada and now known as the "Dawson route." It was over this route that the military expedition of a quarter of a century ago was carried and this route, of old so useful, presents the means of forming an available water-way from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg into which latter flows the Saskatchewan, a great river already in large part navigable and susceptible of being made so throughout its entire course from Lake Winnipeg to the foot hills of the Rocky Mountains.

Here, then, is a water-way which, before entertaining the idea of expending the resources of the country in deepening the St. Lawrence canals to an extent greater than that at present being provided for or needed, should, to say the least, be very fully considered, for it would, for one thing, be the best feeder to the St. Lawrence canals which, even on a draught of fourteen feet, will have the capacity to carry the traffic of a continent.

It is not wise in the present era of progress to look on such schemes as being chimerical. Our neighbours across the lines have projected a water-way from Lake