

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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THE WILLIAM WELD COMPANY (LIMITED),
LONDON, CANADA.

Mackenzie, shrewd mechanic as he was, said: "I
am certainly satisfied that the Ottawa Valley pre-
sents the greatest facilities of any route upon the
continent for the transportation of the products
of the Northwest to the Atlantic Ocean."

The first effect of the opening of this new water-
way would be to greatly shorten the water distance
from the west and north-west, and from
such lake ports as Chicago, Milwaukee, Duluth
and Sault Ste Marie, very considerably, so that
produce going by it from say Fort William or
Chicago to Liverpool or Bristol would have the
advantage of a route some 1,000 miles shorter
than any via New York. When the matter was
before the Canadian Senate in 1898 figures were
presented showing that by this route produce
would get to the Atlantic tide-water from the
Great Lakes 75 hours quicker than via the Wel-
land Canal and the St. Lawrence. This means
a saving of over three days in inland navigation
each way, and is applicable to the commerce of
over 2,250,000 square miles of North America.

The great point for the farmer is, of course,
to have his produce carried to the market cheap-
ly, as well as expeditiously. On this point we
have some valuable information from Mr. T. C.
Clarke, consulting engineer, who goes into de-
tails to show that by way of the proposed Ot-
tawa and Georgian Bay Canal wheat would be
carried from Chicago to Montreal at a total cost
of 2½ cents per bushel, which, he adds, is far
below the cost of any existing route; indeed, less
than one-half the estimated charge by the New
York route after the Erie Canal is deepened. If
the carriage of wheat could be so lowered from
Chicago, it follows that our ever-increasing
wheat crop from the Northwest, and other heavy

freight both east and west, could be carried to
corresponding advantage. Your readers do not
need to be informed of the enormous benefit that
comes to the public from the presence of water-
ways in a country. It was long since proved
that the Great Lakes that lie between Canada
and the United States are the most powerful regu-
lators of railway rates that can be conceived.
Mr. Fink, for instance, points out that a few
sailing vessels at Chicago, in connection with a
few canal boats on the Erie Canal, have been
able, during the season of navigation, to fix the
rates for the transportation of grain from Chi-
cago to New York. Similarly, in Canada, we
have experienced great and abiding benefits from
the water carriage of freight. The construction
of the proposed new canal would be but an addi-
tion to the facilities already afforded, and if it
could be provided for a reasonable expenditure,
and its advantages were as here set forth, it
would be an exceedingly good thing to have at
the earliest possible time.

Now, as to the cost. We will not anticipate
the report of the Canadian Government engineers
who have been making a thorough survey of the
route for the guidance of Parliament. But it is
interesting to note the expert evidence given be-
fore the Senate Committee on this point. It has
to be borne in mind that the distance between
Montreal and the terminus of the new waterway
at the mouth of the French River, on Georgian
Bay, is some 430 miles. Of this distance, some
351 miles are already a perfect natural naviga-
tion, and require little, if any, improvement, and
the engineers report that it is entirely practicable
so to improve the remaining 79 miles as to con-
vert the whole chain of waters into first-class
navigation for steam vessels, and to reduce the
length of canalling to about twenty miles. One
engineer estimates that this could be done for
\$17,000,000, and another says it would require
\$25,000,000 to complete the canal and provide
the necessary elevator and other terminal facili-
ties. It is understood at Ottawa that British
moneyed men were ready to raise the capital a
number of years ago, on condition that the Gov-
ernment guaranteed the bonds for twenty years,
paying between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000 a year
for this purpose, and the leading member of a
great firm of British engineers and builders came
to Canada and undertook to aid in raising the
money required, and to complete the works in
four or five years, on the conditions suggested, it
being understood that the canal would be fourteen
feet deep. But, though the Senate Committee
reported in favor of the scheme, and the Senate
unanimously endorsed the report, nothing further
was done by Parliament till last session when
the Minister of Public Works agreed to have the
new and exhaustive survey undertaken which has
been progressing all summer.

The engineers tell us there is plenty of water
for a fourteen-foot canal, that the engineering dif-

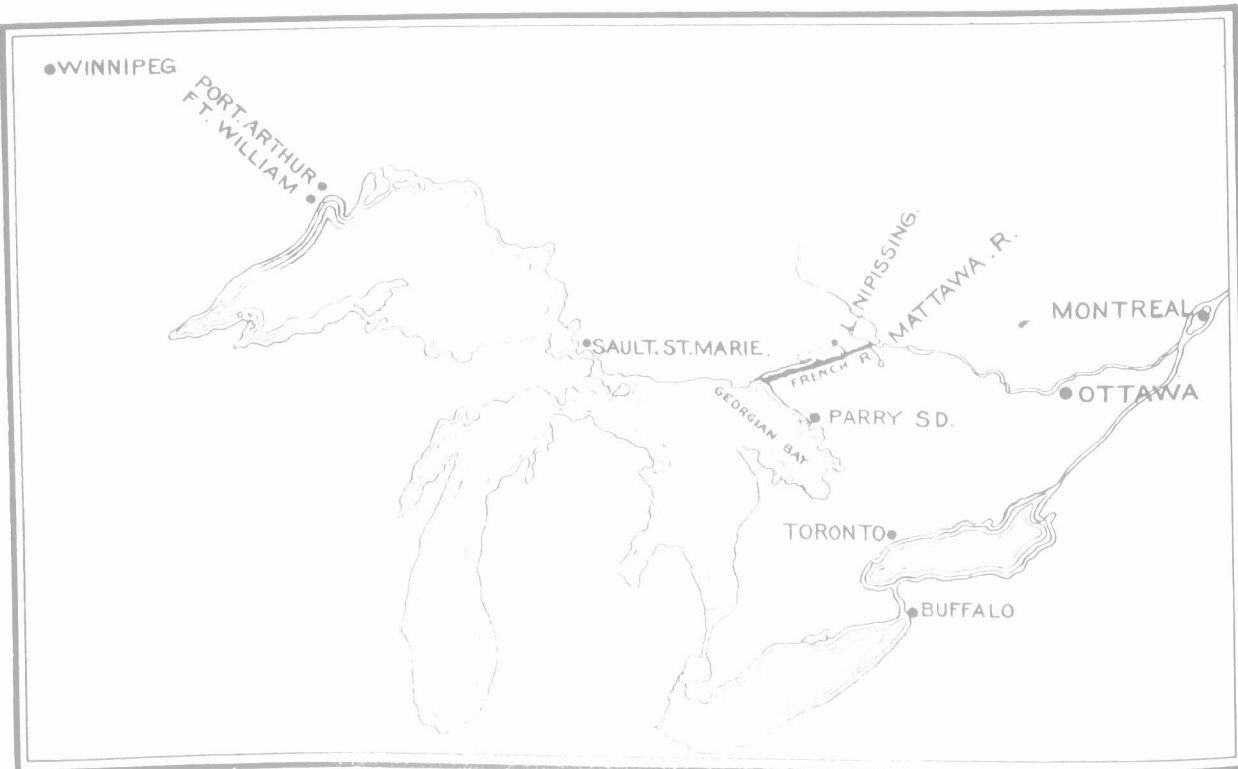
ficulties are not very great, that the waterway is
already by nature nearly all that it ought to be,
and so it resolves itself into the price the tax-
payers will have to give for the capital necessary
to provide this splendid new waterway, with all
its attendant advantages for the production of
that great desideratum and modern motive power
—electrical energy. We have been spending money
freely for the development of our country—some
say too freely. But if money is spent in such a
way as to vastly lower the cost of carrying our
products and what we have to buy in exchange,
a liberal expenditure is wise economy.

Some peoples, like our neighbors to the south,
have a large national indebtedness as a conse-
quence of warfare. We believe in an indebted-
ness, if we must have it, for the peaceful develop-
ment and upbuilding of our industries, trade and
commerce, and if it will compensate the country
to provide the Georgian Bay Canal, it ought to
be provided, but we must first be well assured
about the cost. The people of New York State
are spending \$100,000,000 to improve the Erie
Canal, so strenuous is their effort to divert the
carrying trade of the West and Northwest to the
port of New York. Can Canada afford to leave
unprovided a waterway that will, more than any
other agency, enable her to hold her own in the
carrying trade of North America? is the query
propounded to us by those who favor this new
and short water route to the Atlantic.

If it is resolved that the new waterway is a
necessity, the question of who shall build it and
who control it will at once come up. Eminent
engineers have readily expressed the conviction
that if built by private enterprise alone, the
canal could be made profitable to the promoters.
But there have been many, indeed, who believe
that this waterway—the gateway of continental
commerce—should be constructed and controlled
by the National Government and held in trust
for the benefit of the whole Dominion. In this
we fully agree.

We have endeavored to set forth the merits of
the proposed new artery of continental commerce,
which has the recommendation of being one en-
tirely through Canadian territory, and to be un-
rivalled in point of directness of route to and
from the great wheat fields of the West and North-
west, in plain and unvarnished fashion. When the
Government engineers have made a thorough and
complete report to Parliament, which they are now
compiling, the time will have come to give the
subject the fullest consideration on the lines indi-
cated. With the development of the Northwest
proceeding at its present rate, there will be
abundance of traffic not only for this new water-
way, but for all the rival routes, whether by rail
or water. But if the eminent engineers whose
opinions we have quoted know their business, the
Georgian Bay Canal will have an enormous ad-
vantage over them all.

J. D. C.



Proposed Georgian Bay Canal.