

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE.
THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER.

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Mackenzie, shrewd mechanic as he was, said: "I am certainly satisfied that the Ottawa Valley presents 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 waterway 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 Welland 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 cheaply, as well as expeditiously. On this point we have some valuable information from Mr. T. C. Clarke, consulting engineer, who goes into details to show that by way of the proposed Ottawa 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 waterways in a country. It was long since proved that the Great Lakes that lie between Canada and the United States are the most powerful regulators 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 Chicago 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 addition 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 before 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 navigation, and require little, if any, improvement, and the engineers report that it is entirely practicable so to improve the remaining 79 miles as to convert 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 facilities. It is understood at Ottawa that British moneyed men were ready to raise the capital a number of years ago, on condition that the Government 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-

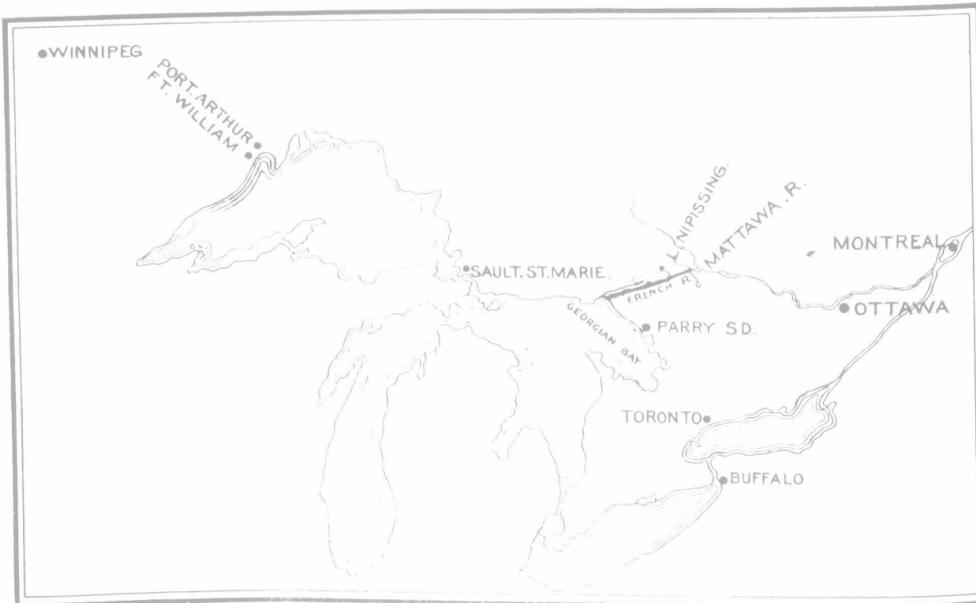
ficulties are not very great, that the waterway is already by nature nearly all that it ought to be, and so it resolves itself into the price the taxpayers will have to give for the capital necessary to provide this splendid new waterway, with all its attendant advantages for the production of that great 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 consequence of warfare. We believe in an indebtedness, if we must have it, for the peaceful development 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 entirely through Canadian territory, and to be unrivalled in point of directness of route to and from the great wheat fields of the West and Northwest, 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 indicated. With the development of the Northwest proceeding at its present rate, there will be abundance of traffic not only for this new waterway, 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 advantage over them all.

J. D. C.



Proposed Georgian Bay Canal.