

With respect to the first difficulty, viz : the Falls of Niagara, it occurred to the Commissioners that it might be surmounted by a canal commencing on the River Ouse, (Grand River) or any other convenient point on Lake Erie, and leading to Burlington Bay, at the head of Lake Ontario. The Ouse, or Grand River, was more particularly selected for the point of departure, as containing, at all seasons, an abundant supply of water, to feed a canal of any dimensions, as being sufficiently remote from the frontier, and as possessing one very material advantage, viz : that it is free from ice, at least three weeks or a month earlier than at Fort Erie ; the latter port being frequently blocked up by the Lake ice till the latter end of May or beginning of June.

There were other inducements which led the Board to prefer this point, to which they will advert in a subsequent part of their Report. Burlington Bay, to which they directed their attention as the outlet of the contemplated canal, is situated at the west end of Lake Ontario, from which it is separated by a narrow sandy ridge, and with which it communicates by a narrow and shallow channel navigable only for boats. It is a large and deep Basin capable of sheltering the whole Royal Navy of Great Britain ; it is remote from the frontier—is considered by military men a strong military position—is surrounded by a populous and highly cultivated country, and seems designed by nature as the centre of a flourishing trade.

It was, therefore, under every view of the subject, considered a most important point in the general plans of the Board. and it was determined that surveys should be undertaken to ascertain the practicability of connecting, by the most direct course, two points possessing so many advantages as the Ouse and Burlington Bay, and which might, at a comparatively small expense, be rendered safe and commodious harbours.

Four plans of improvement offered themselves to the notice of the Board in the Eastern Section of the Province, in which a greater variety of considerations demanded attention.

*First.*—The melioration of the main channel of the St. Lawrence, by removing rocks and shoals, constructing locks and towing paths, and making short cuts in difficult places.

*Second.*—A canal commencing at any convenient place near the Gallop rapids, which, keeping near the river, would terminate near the Lake St. Francis.

*Third.*—A canal commencing also near the Gallop rapids, which should convey the waters of the St. Lawrence through the interior of the country, and blend them with the waters of the Ottawa, near the Long Sault, or at some other convenient point.

*Fourth.*—A canal commencing near Kingston, which, following up the Grand River, Cataraqui, to its head waters, and crossing the numerous Lakes in the interior, which serve as reservoirs, and feeders for the rivers Cataraqui, Gananoque, and Rideau, would descend the valley of the latter river or the Petite Nation, and terminate in the Ottawa.

The first of these plans, if adopted, would obviously be useful in time of peace, though to a limited extent, and would facilitate the intercourse of the Province with the ocean. It would also recommend itself strongly to the consideration of the Legislature, should the state of the Public funds unfortunately forbid the greater enterprise which shall be pointed out. The objections to it are, that it would only partially remove the impediments that are to be found in the navigation, and that the whole line of communication by the St. Lawrence would be liable to interruption, and would doubtless be interrupted in the event of any future war with the neighbouring States.

The second, though it would more extensively improve the navigation, is liable to similar objections ; being also too near the frontier.

The third plan would carry the communication with the ocean through the interior from Prescott, and leaving behind our eastern boundary, run some distance into the Lower Province. Whether the nature of the country in the interior would admit of a route such as is here proposed, is of course a point of some uncertainty, and can only be determined by the level. Nevertheless, from the general flat character of the country, and the information obtained respecting it, the Commissioners are inclined to the opinion that the scheme is practicable, and that if it were necessary at the summit to rise above the level of the St. Lawrence, a sufficient supply of water could be drawn from the numerous streams which intersect the country in every direction, and which might be carried, as feeders, into the canal.