

man's axe, the grand water-way for the immense rafts of square timber, taken down to the St. Lawrence, to the timber market in Montreal, Three Rivers and Quebec. Each year, until within about two or three years, the steamers 'Vermont,' 'Hope,' 'Aurora' and 'Monarch,' as well as others the names of which escape me, have towed rafts, barges and pontoons almost to the village of Ste. Geneviève, to a place called L'Anse du Pont de Pierre. In 1882 or 1883, Mr. Girouard, then member for Jacques Cartier, now a judge of the Supreme Court, organized at Lachine a political excursion, by steamboat, to Ste. Geneviève, and on that occasion, for a first time the rather large steamboat 'Beauharnois' was seen moored to an emergency wharf at that town. Often since, smaller boats than those above mentioned have gone down below Ile Bizard, and have turned near the foot of Rapide l'Allemand. As to the north side of the Ile Bizard, it is washed by the Lake of Two Mountains, which has a depth of water sufficient for the class of navigation under present consideration. So much for that part of the Rivière des Prairies, which covers an extent of about six miles. Navigation is both possible and practicable in that part of it.

As to the part of that river extending from Bout de l'Île de Montreal on the east side of the level above the village of St. Vincent de Paul, we find that about 1860, and even before that the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Company, I think, known then under another name, had for about fifteen years a steamboat service between Montreal, St. Vincent de Paul and Terrebonne. The old wharf is still there; the steamer 'Terrebonne' did the service. When the reformatory of St. Vincent de Paul was changed into a penitentiary, prisoners were brought there from Kingston and elsewhere on board the steamer 'l'Aigle.'

The distance between Bout de l'Île and St. Vincent de Paul is about twelve miles.

The only work that would be needed on that section of river would be the clearing up or dredging of the channel of the Rapide de la Passe, in front of the village of Rivière des Prairies. Every spring time the Marine Department places about a dozen buoys in that rapid for the guidance of the rafts and for general purposes of navigation.

You may reasonably ask me: What caused the cessation of navigation in that part? I may point out two, amongst other reasons: 1st, the building of the Quebec, Montreal and Occidental railway, now a part of the Canadian Pacific. This line made it then impossible for any line of vessels to compete with it in trade. The second cause is the gradual yearly lowering of the water level for a quarter of a century back, and the working of the ice on the banks and bed of the river. The ice tore

up the bottom of the river and rolled here and there the heavy boulders that got into the deeper channels and broke up the navigation. I do not believe that in the last twenty-five years the government ever spent one cent to remedy that unfortunate state of affairs.

As to the fifteen miles of river above St. Vincent de Paul and up the Ile Bizard, it never was utilized for purposes of navigation although it was always a passage way for timber and rafts. It is a part that would require more work to improve it; but once that work is done it would be of the greatest importance as a water-way and will make navigation around the Island of Montreal practicable. At that place there is located a felt mill, and the electric power-house of the Saraguay Light, Heat and Power Company, as also a knitting mill, the Ile Bizard grist mill, several manufactories, and the far-famed limestone quarries of St. François de Sales, St. Martin and Bordeaux, since navigation has ceased, the population has augmented, needs have increased, business has extended; and yet the only means of transportation is the Canadian Pacific railway, which has stations only at Bordeaux, Parc Laval, St. Martin, St. Vincent de Paul and François de Sales. Their charges are burdensome and the company, so far as transportation is concerned, has a monopoly over the entire territory. For instance, on the single article of coal consumed by the penitentiary according to a statement given in 1902 or 1903 the Department of Justice would save about \$5,000 each year were the retransportation by water instead of by rail. I think there is a difference of about \$1 per ton between the water and the rail rates. Consider, then, the immense benefits that would accrue if a sum sufficient were voted to improve the navigation of that river to such a degree that boats drawing five or six feet of water might ply upon it. I have dwelt on this point to considerable extent in the hope of seeing a sufficient sum voted to permit of the dredging and clearing up of the rivers des Prairies and Jésus, and the rendering of them more useful to the entire city of Montreal and its neighbourhood.

I will now turn to the larger and national side of the question. I desire to show how this very section may become a strong link in that magnificent chain of water-way, to be known as the Georgian Bay canal—a project that now challenges the attention of two continents and of the two great sections of this continent—the United States and Canada.

Turning now to the grand national project of the future, of which the work suggested must form a not inconsiderable part, I shall ask your attention for but a few moments. The primary idea that inspired