

its own State is only one-ninth of the aggregate, the remainder coming from the western and central States, or Canada. The State of New York does not furnish as large an amount of tonnage for the canal as is supplied by either Michigan, Illinois, or Wisconsin, singly. No less conclusive is the testimony of half a century as to its unequivocal success, present value, and certainty of the continued increase of its trade.

The magnitude of the present annual productions of the States bordering on the lakes is not entirely unknown to the public; but few know how fertile is the soil and genial the climate of the vast areas to the north-west of Lake Superior, soon to become settled and increase that yet undeveloped commerce of the lakes which will pass through our own territory, enrich our merchants, employ our own people, and aid in diminishing our national burdens, if we are true to our own just interests and are faithful stewards of the public trust committed to our charge.

Already the average annual income of the canal, after deducting all expenses, is \$3,000,000, carefully applied to the extinction of the debt incurred by the construction. At the present rate of income, not computing its prospective increase, the debt will be wholly discharged in eight years. Subject to the existing lien on it the canal could now be readily sold for at least \$50,000,000.

It has been seen that in the rivalry between the carrying systems of the St. Lawrence river and the Erie canal, or Hudson river, the route through our own country is incomparably the most successful competitor, affording, even to a large proportion of the Canadians themselves, the best means of communicating with Atlantic ports and the world at large. Yet it is said that with certain enlargements of her canals the St. Lawrence would bear away the palm of victory, and British-Canadian capitalists are urged to invest in the doubtful experiment. A sum small in comparison with the present cost of the Erie canal, expended in judicious improvements upon it so as to permit the passage of boats of a greater size, would reduce by one-half, or 50 per cent., the present cost of transportation on it. A similar saving has been actually effected by similar means already applied, and competent engineers and statisticians bear testimony to the repetition of equal results from further improvement.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT OF THE CANAL AND ITS NATIONAL RESULTS.

Under the liberal system hitherto adopted by the State of New York, this reduction in the cost of freight would inure to the benefit of the western farmer by practically diminishing distance between him and the consumer in the cities and manufacturing districts in the east, and our customers throughout the world. The State, after all her expenditures, is yet only the friendly channel or medium between the producer and consumer, and is interested for her own citizens only so far as they constitute a part of the whole people of the Union.

In a previous report the attention of Congress was called towards securing the realization of the proposal of the State of New York (still embodied in a law) to adapt the Erie and Oswego canals of that State to the military uses of the national government. To attain this object only a small sum is necessary compared with that required to overcome the natural obstacle of Niagara Falls. The desired result could be attained in one-third the time and at one-third of the cost necessary for the completion of any practical work that could carry the line of trade round the falls. Nor would the adaptation of the New York canals to the uses proposed be only an experiment, costly in expenditure of time and money.