

the Charlevoix road and Hull and Alymer railway, where water is doing the work which has heretofore been done by coal. The chief obstacles to an early change on the larger roads are the hundreds of millions invested in locomotives, and the very large outlay required to equip existing steam roads with the electric system. The principal inducement would be the passenger service, owing to the increased speed possible,—it being confidently stated that, with electricity, a speed considerably over one hundred miles per hour could be attained. Moreover there would be entire abolition of the poisonous smoke which drops upon the Pullman in preference to any coach ahead of it.

While the conversion of trunk lines would be attended with a cost which is for the present prohibitory, this objection does not apply to new lines which may be worked independently, or in connection with electric ones. When the time arrives for such railways, water power will have a field of usefulness of which we can at present form little conception. Water wheels and wires would displace the coal docks, the coal laden vessels, the huge coal yards, and the trains required for distributing their contents over hundreds of miles of lines.

An interior line connecting Lake St. John, on the Saguenay, with Lake Temiscamingue, on the Ottawa, which could ultimately be extended, via Missanabi, Nepigon, and Lac Seul to the Saskatchewan, would be a colonization road—removed from the frontier—one which could be worked possibly altogether by water power, and would open a virgin tract in which electro-chemical and electro-metallurgical industries might arise, as well as those connected with the products of the forests and the mine.

TRANSPORTATION.

The more extended use of our water power, in the immediate future, for manufacturing and mining purposes, especially for the electro-chemical and metallurgical productions, naturally leads to the consideration of the character of the output, especially with regard to markets, and transportation problems generally.

Transportation, next to production, is the most important commercial question to a country of vast distances, and low priced products affording great tonnage such as we produce, and for which we have expended hundreds of millions in canals and railways, harbours, light-houses and steamers,—a sum disproportioned to our realized wealth, as it certainly is to our population. But, *noblesse oblige*, we possess a vast estate, are compelled to develop it—and await results.

The question of transportation determines, to a great extent, the existence, or otherwise, of a possible industry, and enhances or diminishes