

of Finance, speaking on behalf of the Government. But if the question of expense precludes immediate practical action, that is all the more reason why there should be a thorough discussion of the subject now, so that the people of the country might become familiar with it in its every aspect; and if finally the matter should be decided in the negative, then the discussion will have served the purpose of indicating the various grounds of opposition to the scheme, and making clear the inadvisability, if that should be the ultimate conclusion, of building the canal. But I believe that any one who reads the report submitted by the International Joint Commission, and carefully studies it from every standpoint, will be fairly well convinced, if he starts out with an open mind, that the ultimate building of the canal is something which will be accomplished in the future in this country. There has been considerable discussion on the question not only in Canada, but also in the United States, and I have under my hand a copy of the Congressional Record, of a week ago to-day, in which it was presented both pro and con in the United States Senate.

Now, we should bear in mind that Canada is a great undeveloped country. We have in this Dominion a country of an immense area, and only by comparison can we really fully appreciate its vast extent. It is larger in area than the United States and twice the size of Europe, leaving out Russia. And yet, in that part of Europe excluding Russia, there are 300,000,000 people, compared to eight or nine millions in Canada, which has double the area. If this work is finally decided to be undertaken and the canal is built, it will bring about a greater development of our resources, it will attract more people to the country, and, to my mind, will very materially help my hon. friends to my left in reducing the expense of transporting their wheat from the prairie provinces to Liverpool. Furthermore, it will make for cheaper production in the development of power on the St. Lawrence waterways. We should not forget that anything that can develop the country will bring more people to the country, and in that way serve to reduce the national debt. If in twenty years you could double the population of Canada you would cut your per capita debt in two; and Canada is one of the few countries in the world to-day that are in the happy position of being able to open their doors to an extensive increase in population and thus secure a diminution

[Mr. Manion.]

in the national debt. Most of the European countries are not in that fortunate position. The British Isles are to-day as crowded as they wish to be, and Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and in fact any of those countries you care to name, are more or less completely developed. And even the United States is practically fully developed. So that Canada, as I say, is in the position of being able to open its gates to a larger flood of the right kind of immigration and so, by increasing its population, cut down its debt.

The agitation on behalf of this proposal aims at making the Great Lakes, not from a sentimental standpoint, but for business reasons, the Mediterranean of America. Any one studying the commercial history of the world will find that such cities as Venice, Carthage and Alexandria, and such countries as Great Britain, Holland, Spain, the Baltic cities of Germany which formed the Hanseatic League, and various other countries and cities that have come into the limelight or are prominent to-day as trading centres, attained that status by virtue of the fact that they had access to the sea and had cheap transportation facilities that enabled them to carry on easy commercial intercourse with other countries. Water transportation, as all hon. members know, is very much cheaper than rail transportation. Some authorities estimate an advantage of ten to one in favour of the former, but certainly a conservative estimate would be that water transportation is three to five times cheaper than the other.

All Canada is interested in this question, and I believe that the majority of the people, after carefully considering it, will be in favour of the ultimate building of the system of canals proposed. I admit that both in the United States and in Canada there are certain centres of population opposed to the project. In the United States it is being opposed by New York and Boston, because these cities feel that a certain amount of business would be taken by way of the St. Lawrence and that they would lose traffic in consequence. That may be true. And yet I do not know that New York, immense as it is, has any particular reason to fear for its future growth. In the United States there is one other city, Buffalo, which opposes the scheme, because that city is at the head of the Erie canal, which carries probably 65 per cent of the grain of western Canada to New York to be exported to Europe. Naturally, that city fears that it may lose a certain amount