

CANAL STATISTICS.

The greater ease with which heavy goods can be transported by water than they can on land, was no doubt discovered at an age before we have any history relating to such matters. From observing this, the system of constructing artificial waterways arose. Over 3,600 years ago, a canal of large dimensions existed at Babylon. Large portions of a canal in China extending 1,000 miles is believed to have been built 1,200 years ago. In the 12th century, these waterways were first constructed in Europe, Holland having the distinction of introducing them, as it still has the front rank as the utilizer of canals as a net work of roads. Amsterdam owes its importance to a ship canal 51 miles long, by which ships reach it from the sea. A canal 150 miles long connects the Atlantic with the Mediterranean via Toulouse. Whether locks are a Dutch or Italian invention is disputed. England had no canal until 1755, when one was built from Manchester southward, before the railway era, these canals in England having an aggregate length of 2,200 miles, some of which have been dried up and used as the road-bed of a railway. In 1792 the first canal was constructed on this continent in the State of Massachusetts. There are now 3,710 miles of canal in operation in the United States, the second in length being the Erie, completed in 1825, enlarged in 1862, and now proposed to be improved at a cost of sixty millions of dollars, in order to make it a competitor with the St. Lawrence and its connections. The project is one of extreme interest to Canada, to this city in particular, for, if the Erie is enlarged as proposed, it will divert a considerable freight traffic from the waterway of Canada, and from this port, which freight will pass on to New York. The first canal in Canada, the Lachine, was completed in 1826, its original depth being only 4 1-2 feet, and its cost, \$488,400. In 1823, a company was formed to build the Welland Canal. After various changes this great work was finished in 1853, and became a Government work. From official sources we glean the following data as to the cost of the 23 canals now owned and operated by the Dominion of Canada, which we have placed so as to show the outlay last year and the total expenditure on these works up to 1899.

Canals	Outlay 1899 Capital Account	Cost of Staff 1899.	Tolls Revenue 1899.	Total Cost up to 1899.
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Welland.....	86,110	158,644	23,771,635	
Lachine.....	162,352	55,990	3,451	10,787,094
Beauharnois.....	20,613	29,883	1,636,690	
St. Lawrence.....	513,776	2,819	1,884,794	
Lake St. Louis.....	57,607		250,066	
" St. Francis.....	57,110		26,530	
Cornwall.....	37,649	16,000	34,510	6,563,008
Williamsburg.....	1,392,012	9,960		7,170,592
St. Anne's.....		1,920	1,102	1,170,215
Carillon.....	37,998	11,919	5,978	4,151,360
Calabate.....				379,494
Rideau.....		30,751	8,425	4,095,044
St. Ours.....		2,244	587	121,538
Chambly.....		18,336	7,964	637,057

St. Peter's.....				648,548
Murray.....		5,074	667	1,247,470
Trent & Tay.....	166,611	5,049	1,102	3,019,370
Sault Ste. Marie.....	63,935	13,843	30	3,742,514
Soulanges.....	1,442,826			5,098,260
Not specified.....			129,043	
Totals.....	3,899,877	280,628	371,386	75,404,279

The total quantity of freight passed through the several divisions of the canals in 1898, the last season reported, is as follows:

	Farm products Tons	Merchandise Tons	Wood Tons	Total Tons
Welland.....	732,479	267,567	140,031	1,140,077
St. Lawrence.....	953,256	424,376	61,502	1,439,134
Chambly.....	9,706	105,691	155,939	271,830
Ottawa.....	7,887	3,849	538,250	549,986
Rideau.....	3,324	21,384	30,238	54,946
St. Peter's.....	6,497	52,115	5,878	64,490
Murray.....	3,204	8,302	4,037	15,543
Trent Valley.....	671	399	26,606	27,676

Up to 1899, since Confederation, the amount of the expenditure on the canals of Canada which was charged to Capital was \$55,875,854, leaving \$20,528,425, as the outlay prior to Confederation, making the total cost of the canal system, as in above table, \$76,404,279. If we take the amount charged to Capital since 1868 as bearing interest at 3 per cent., we have \$1,676,275 as the annual cost of the canals for interest on their cost since that date. The annual revenue does not cover current expenses. The contrast between the traffic through the Welland Canal and the Erie and other New York canals is very noticeable. From 1869 to 1894, the average annual tonnage of vegetable food passed through the New York canals was 1,500,000 tons; then came a serious decline, so that, in recent years, the average was only 735,000 tons. On the Welland, the average tonnage 1869 to 1894, was 456,480 tons for that class of freight, and since 1894, the average has been 703,200 tons. The secret of the falling off in Erie Canal traffic is the fact that the New York Central has been increasing its freight traffic at the expense of its canal competitor. The New York Central freight of above class, cereal foods, has more than doubled its tonnage since 1888, while the canal in same period had its freight reduced one-half. These facts point to a strong opposition being made by the New York Central to the movement for enlarging the Erie Canal so as to bring back its lost trade. Our enlarged canal route can compete with the railway, but would have a dangerous rival in a deep canal from Erie to New York, so that every possible effort should be made to so develop and equip the St. Lawrence route as to give our canals and the river the supreme control over the traffic from the interior of this continent to the ocean.

MANAGER WILLIAM LEWIS of the Manchester Assurance Company of Manchester, England, arrived in New York a few days ago.

THE COMMERCIAL UNION ASSURANCE COMPANY have decided to take over the Accident Branch of the Palatine in addition to its other business.