

EXTRACTS FROM STATISTICAL STATEMENT PREPARED BY
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And read at the Meeting held in the Toronto Exchange, in August, 1856, for the purpose of considering the propriety of establishing a line of Steamers on the Western Lakes, &c.

The commerce of our Western Lakes borne to the harbor of New York by the Erie Canal, created Buffalo and peopled the west; and small as the capacity of the Erie Canal is in comparison with the St. Lawrence, it is amply sufficient to tempt the bulk of the lake trade over its water when once that trade has reached Lake Erie. The benefits of that trade are thus lost to Canada. Nor does the Welland Canal do more than feebly realize for us, parallel advantages from that small proportion of the lake commerce which reaches, through it, the United States ports on Lake Ontario. Yet, (as is justly observed by Mr. Andrews in his Report to the Senate of the United States on the lake trade,) the peninsula of Canada, especially that narrow neck lying between the Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario, occupies the position of a stepping stone between the commercial States of the Atlantic and Europe, and the mineral and agricultural regions of the North-west.

Canada has, therefore, the power to command the trade between the manufacturers and their supporters to flow through her territory, and to yield her a share of the wealth and prosperity which so important a trade must create. This legitimate purpose—a purpose which every true Canadian should cherish—is only partially effected by the Welland Canal and the Great Western Railway; it is reserved for Toronto, if she is true to herself, to push it a great step in advance: in fact it is within her grasp to accomplish it, and while enriching Canada to enrich herself, and take her place among the first commercial cities of this continent; and while the coffers of the Great Western are filled to repletion by a traffic which legitimately belongs to it as the connecting link in the great central line of American railways, the people of Toronto may conduct another branch of the Western trade, to which an equal importance attaches, so as to flow by their own wharves to its natural channel, the St. Lawrence. This great object, however, is not to be accomplished by suffering the trade to pass to Lake Erie; for the moment it has passed the obstruction of St. Clair Flats, it is within the legitimate influence of the Erie Canal; and whether it goes into that channel at Buffalo or Oswego, it is equally lost to Canada. We must control it, therefore, ere it passes the Straits of Mackinaw,—and this we can do by availing ourselves of the advantages afforded by spanning the narrow isthmus from Toronto to Nottawasaga Bay. By this route, we set 600 miles of lake navigation, with 90 miles of railway, against 1200 miles of lake navigation, embracing the obstructions of the St. Clair Flats, the dangers of Lake Erie, and the delays and expenses of the Welland Canal; and this entirely surmounts the extra expense of transit over the short piece of railway: while we expedite the transit of the freight by several days, and place it in the hands of forwarders at Toronto, who will forward it to its ultimate destination, unbiassed by any other considerations than the respective advantages of the several routes which intervene between this city and the sea-board.

Nor should we be guilty of indulging in too brilliant a prospective, if we anticipated the frequent landing of vessels at our wharves direct for Europe, which would return with manufactured goods for the West. It is certain that a class of vessels much better adapted for ocean navigation than those that pass through the Welland Canal may pass from Lake Ontario to the Atlantic; and the present season is witness of more than one departure from Chicago, freighted with produce, direct for Liverpool.

The advantages occupied by Toronto in this contrast, is represented by the following calculation, which, being based upon the figures of a former Chief Engineer of the State of New York, and sanctioned by subsequent authorities, may be taken as an impartial statement; and I have adopted these as a better average than could be arrived at, than by taking the rates actually paid, which may from time to time,