

sea-bases from the United States. If the United States had not entered the War, we might conclude that they were sunk in sloth and would not defend even their own possessions. At one stroke they dispelled that illusion. The truth is, Canada, apart from the Maritime Provinces, has no sea-base on the Atlantic coast, unless the Hudson's Bay route is taken seriously; but now that the money is spent the opinion expressed upon these pages nine years ago is generally accepted as correct. That illusion also is at an end.

It is a principle of history that a free nation must have reasonable access to the sea by communications which are fairly secure. That access is secured for Canada by the St. Lawrence, but only for seven months in the year and that only in time of peace. During the other five months communication is obtained by three lines of railway: the Canadian Pacific, the Intercolonial, and the Grand Trunk Pacific. Of these lines the Canadian Pacific runs for 150 miles through United States territory. The Grand Trunk Pacific skirts the border of Maine for 100 miles. The Intercolonial is only a little further removed.

All access to the sea, even by the St. Lawrence, is under direct control of the United States, on account of the projection of the State of Maine to within 30 miles of the St. Lawrence. This one outpost dominates the life of Canada, which exists only by the will of its neighbour. For many years we have been striving to create a line north of the St. Lawrence between Quebec and St. Catherine's Bay on the Saguenay; but the natural difficulties are insuperable and national energies are required for more immediate needs.

At the first touch of War the problem obtruded itself. In the autumn of 1914 Canada was able to dispatch a contingent of 40,000 men by the St. Lawrence. During that and the succeeding winter all reinforcements were obliged to proceed by rail; the Canadian Pacific was useless for the purpose, since it passed through foreign territory. The port of St. John in New Brunswick was consequently unavailable, and the burden of traffic fell upon Halifax alone. It was only