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## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

### THE ORIGINS OF OUR CANAL SYSTEM

By Ernest Marcenau.

It has for years been one of the writer's cherished hopes that at some date or other, he could afford the time necessary to put together, in presentable shape, some notes and general information, gathered in the course of his service in the Department of Railways and Canals of the Dominion, and bearing on the history, the mode of construction and the operation of these canals.

But years have been creeping on, and the work, which is of no small magnitude and importance, is still untouched, the absorbing exigencies of everyday bread earning having left no place for such a *hors d'oeuvre*.

A last hope had, however, been entertained, and this was, that on retiring from the Presidency of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, it would be possible to give the book in an abbreviated form, but, owing to the same cause, this hope also had to be abandoned and the paper which is going to be read to you will have to be confined to what was intended to be the opening chapter of the writer's ambitious work. It will only be supplemented with a summary comparison between the present system of Canadian canals and the results obtained by the early efforts of those whose part it was to inaugurate it. This will, it is hoped, be found of some interest as indicating in a measure the marvellous development of our country in the course of the last century.

### EARLY CANALS.

There is something fascinating in going back to the origins of works, the magnitude of which escapes the attention of those who see them in their achieved condition and have no time to even think of the mighty efforts which have been required to realize them. For instance, we of the twentieth century use our canals, benefit by them, even boast of them as being unparalleled in the world, but who among us has taken the trouble to enquire into the first show of activity of our ancestors in this line of progress? The literature of our canal system is in a very rudimentary