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From the Great Lakes to the Sea

Some Economic Advantages that will Accrue to the Producers Through
the Inauguration of the Deep Waterways Scheme—Now Dealt With
by International Commission—Power Development Would Pay Cost

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AN organization has been formed called the "Canadian Deep Waterways and Power Association" to further the project for the deepening of the St. Lawrence River, so as to permit ocean steamers to sail right up the Great Lakes to Fort William and Port Arthur, Duluth and Superior, Chicago, Detroit, Toronto, etc. This Canadian organization will work in conjunction with the "Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Tidewater Association," which has to do with the American end of the project.

A scheme of this nature must, of necessity, be an economic advantage to the producers of grain in the Canadian northwest before money is spent thereon. There is no doubt in my mind as to these advantages. This association and that association in the City of New York and surrounding country are already passing strong resolutions against the scheme, and are even going so far as to state that the scheme will not benefit the American manufacturing cities and that it will only be of benefit to the farmers in the Canadian northwest. Therefore, *per se*, abandon the scheme.

It is not my purpose in this article to outline for the benefit of the readers the engineering side of the question. Just so long as the scheme is feasible, and is projected, just so long are we interested. Always providing, of course, that the most feasible and economic scheme is adopted.

An Outline of the Plan

A few salient facts might be given for the benefit of readers, and to give them some idea as to the proposed development and cost.

The plan: To remove obstructions in the St. Lawrence River between Lake Ontario and Montreal by joint action of the United States and Canada.

What are the present limits of navigation? Through the lakes, 20 feet in all main channels. At Niagara and down the St. Lawrence 14 feet.

What is being done to raise the limit? At the Soo new locks 24 feet; projected locks 30 feet. At Niagara the new Welland 25-foot channel with 30-foot locks; projected channel 30 feet.

What remains to be done? Only to overcome a series of rapids in the St. Lawrence.

How formidable a job is it? Total fall to be overcome 221 feet, strung over a hundred miles or more, forty odd miles of artificial channel, compared with 326 feet in 25 miles at the Welland.

How serious is the cost? The United States spent about \$50,000,000 to get from the upper to the lower lakes. Canada is spending more than \$65,000,000 to get from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. Both countries are to spend something

over \$100,000,000 to link the great lakes with the ocean. Compare with \$450,000,000 for Panama project.

What dividends are promised? It will save its cost in three years in transportation bills. It will take the crushing load off railroads and terminals. It will develop coastwise traffic along the new coastline. Finally, it costs nothing, the power it develops will pay for it.

What will the channel carry? All lake vessels can deliver their cargoes at an ocean port. Any lake carrier may continue its voyage coastwise or overseas. Two-thirds of the ocean going fleet can make the lake ports at will. Any coasting vessel can come up the lakes as they choose.

What traffic will develop? Free movement of western products to the seaboard by all-water. Lake cargoes delivered at any Atlantic port wherever convenient. Lake cargoes delivered at destination overseas whenever profitable. Direct imports to the heart of the continent whenever conditions favor.

The St. Lawrence improvements fall in two sections: 1st. International—113 miles long the boundary between the United States and Canada from Lake Ontario to St. Regis. 2nd. Canadian—67 miles from St. Regis where the river leaves the boundary line to deep water in Montreal.

Advantages to West

Leaving the more general scheme alone and coming down to the economic advantages to the western producers of grain, we find there will be eight outstanding advantages through the establishment of this route: (1) Reduction of freight rates; (2) elimination of transfers in Bay port elevators; (3) elimination of shortages in eastern elevators; (4) retention of identity of grain shipped; (5) elimination of shrinkage and resultant reduction in quality on account of the numerous transfers now necessary in eastern elevators; (6) elimination of delays to shipments, on account of waiting for ocean space; (7) Fort William and Port Arthur are final points for inspection of western grain, and should be so treated; (8) improvement of car supply.

We will go into each of these advantages fully for the benefit of the readers who are not fully conversant with the grain handling facilities of eastern Canada.

Reduction of Freight Rates

It is an established fact that water transportation is much cheaper than rail. At the present time grain can be shipped to the Atlantic seaboard, during the period of open navigation, in three distinct ways: (a) By boat direct but not exceeding a maximum cargo of 110,000 bushels, on account of water draft; (b) by boat to the Bay ports and then transferred to canal steamers or barges for transshipment