

a similar institution. In a new District, such as Algoma is, it is only a united and concerted action that our necessities and requirements may be made known, not only to the people of older Canada, but to the respective Governments with whom we have to come in contact. It certainly must be very gratifying to you to notice the weight and influence which this Board already possesses, as is shown by the fact that it is constantly being quoted by the press of Canada, as well as the direct benefits which have accrued to the town from which we take our name and to which we owe our allegiance.

Port Arthur being of chief importance as a shipping point, it would probably be appropriate to draw your attention first to some of the matters and things which are more immediately connected with this most important branch of commercial enterprise

THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE ST. LAWRENCE CANALS.

Since addressing you a year ago on the subject of the enlargement of the Canals of the St. Lawrence system it is a pleasure to note that the Government of the Dominion has taken the question up with its usual energy, and already contracts have been let for nearly all the canal work proper required on the different locks above and including those at Cornwall. I am sorry, however, to state that up to this time no authentic information is extant as to the improvement of the Beauharnois Canal. As you are aware, this is one of the longest stretches of canal in the whole system. Without its improvement the remainder are useless; and, owing to the extent of the work, and to ensure completion within any early date, it is absolutely necessary that it should be proceeded with at once. It is understood that the cause of delay is that the Engineers of the Department of Railways and Canals have not as yet decided whether the Beauharnois shall be enlarged or that a wholly new canal be built on the opposite (north) side of the river.

Of course, my hearers understand that the completion of the canal must be supplemented by large improvements in the river and connecting Lakes before a boat can be taken from the lakes to Montreal loaded to a draught of 14 feet. Even with the enlarged canals at the moderate size they will, when completed, be (that is, capable of taking a steamer through loaded with 2,000 tons, or nearly 67,000 bushels wheat) it is hard to estimate the immense possibilities of the St. Lawrence route. It means, to put it plainly, that wheat can be carried profitably from Port Arthur, Duluth or Chicago to the seaboard for 5c. per bushel, including all charges, and that general merchandise can be carried back from Montreal to these same ports for from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per ton, according to class. It must also be borne in mind that this method of transportation is not only more economical than by rail, but that goods can also be delivered in less time than by any fast freight rail line. Even now, with the small steamers at present in use, merchandise is regularly transported during navigation from Liverpool to Chicago, by way of Montreal and the St. Lawrence, in from eight to ten days less time than is possible via New York and the Trunk lines.

As the Liverpool market practically rules that of the export surplus grain produced in our own Northwest, it is quite safe to say that the inhabitants of Canada do not realize the importance of this question. They will, however, when they find that owing to the improved waterways every bushel of wheat nets them five cents more than is possible under existing circumstances. Or, in other words, on a surplus crop amounting to 20,000,000 bushels, which they may soon hope to have, the saving will be one million dollars.