

Bay. But failing that as a safe and reliable route, it is quite within the bounds of possibility, nay even probable, that when this territory is fully developed and settled, those products intended for European markets will be sent by rail to the Saguenay river or Hamilton inlet and shipped thence to their destination.

Another trans-continental railway has yet, in my opinion, to be made—a railway which will pass north of Lake Winnipeg and have its Atlantic terminus probably on Hamilton's inlet, and its Pacific terminus on or about Portland inlet, if not further north.

This railway must pass through the territory claimed by Ontario north of the Height of Land, probably through this fertile belt and at no great distance north of Abitibi. When completed, this section of the country will be brought as near (if not nearer) to the markets of the Old World as Toronto itself.

Another important factor in estimating the value of the land that may be thus reclaimed is suggested by the consideration that it will be "cleared land." Wild lands in the older provinces are encumbered with trees and under-brush which must be cut down and burnt up before they can be cultivated at all. This clearing of bush-land is itself a laborious and expensive operation; but if the stumps and the roots of the trees have also to be removed as they must be in order to admit of *prosp*er cultivation, and the use of labor-saving machinery, the cost is greatly enhanced.

But the soil of these lake basins when drained will, I apprehend, be not only unencumbered with trees and roots, but absolutely free from noxious weeds if not also in such a state of tilth as to allow of the seed, grass or grain as most suitable, being at once sown or put into the ground.

Thus, as compared with the prairie land of the far off North-West, reclaimed land such as I have described, at or near Lake Abitibi, is, other things equal, much more valuable as being from eight hundred to eighteen hundred miles nearer to the common markets for the produce of both. And as compared with the wild lands of the older provinces, it is (other things being equal) much more valuable, inasmuch as the soil will be ready for the reception of the seed, and therefore should be worth as much as cleared land in Western Ontario if not elsewhere.

I shall not enter into any calculation of the expenditure that may be necessary to drain these lakes. That will vary almost indefinitely according to circumstances; and in order to make any even approximately correct or reliable estimates, very careful examinations by competent men would be requisite in each case. I will simply repeat my firm belief, "that the cost will be trifling as compared with the value of the land reclaimed."

I may be too sanguine in regard of the results to be expected from the drainage of the lakes in this territory. But the possibility of being able to drain them and of thus reclaiming, at a moderate cost, such vast areas of land as we find either altogether under water or in the condition of marshes, swamps and muskegs in this northern territory, is a subject, in my opinion, second in importance to no other as bearing on the fitness of the country for settlement and its value not only to the Province of Ontario but to the Dominion at large. It is a subject in which I have felt the deepest interest, and which I have kept more or less in view during all my explorations. It is one, moreover, which has not attracted as yet that attention from engineers and capitalists which I think its importance deserves. For not only in this disputed territory but in many other parts of Ontario and of the older provinces may be found numerous lakes so favourably situated as to admit of their being more or less completely and easily drained, and the drainage of which would be most profitable even in a *financial point of view* if reasonable arrangements could only be made with the governments and the proprietors of the land fronting upon or adjacent to such lakes.

Holding these views in regard to the reclamation of the soil and the agricultural resources of our northern territory, and as to the possibility at least of its proving of immense importance and value to the province, I regret exceedingly that our northern boundary should still remain unsettled. But for this delay, steps would ere this have been taken to set all doubtful questions relative thereto at rest.

I may be wrong, but am nevertheless fully persuaded, that both the commercial and manufacturing interests of the Province of Ontario will be more surely and effectually

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