

ning north and south, parallel with the canal, from lake to lake, connecting with the main line of the G. W. R., the Canada Southern, the G. W. R. Air Line and the Grand Trunk, while by means of the canal the traveler can go or come by steamer in any direction. A daily line of steamers connects the city with all upper and lower ports, while daily communication is also had by steamer with Toronto during the season of navigation.

The land upon which St. Catharines now stands was owned at one time by a Captain Robinson, who was commander of a vessel on Lake Ontario. The town took its name from his widow, who brought this with other property to her second husband, the Hon. Robert Hamilton, from whom it was purchased by the Hon. Mr. Merritt. The conveyance from the Hamiltons bears date the 27th of March, 1816. It would appear from official returns that during a period of forty years, from 1784 to 1824, the year in which the canal was commenced, the population of the township of Grantham did not increase more than one dozen families, the returns showing that in 1784 the township contained 236 heads of families, while in 1824 it contained 248 heads. The amount which Mr. Merritt agreed to pay for a large portion of the land on which St. Catharines now stands was \$6,000. In the year 1819 St. Catharines was visited by a severe conflagration, which swept away the forest and such buildings and inflammable material as were within reach. At this period money was much more difficult to obtain than it is now, trade and commerce being carried on almost exclusively by bartering produce for merchandise, and *vice versa*. So scarce indeed was the circulating medium that the proprietor of the first team of horses owned in the neighborhood, failed in raising \$1.50 on a load of oats, with which to pay the taxes assessed against his property. The property comprising the land between King, Church, Queen and Academy streets, was, the year before the canal was commenced, offered to a man then carrying on business, in exchange for a suit of clothing and a barrel of whiskey, and declined. Now the same property is worth about a million of dollars.