

length locks—220 feet long by 18 feet wide—now in construction on the Oswego and Erie Canals, are completed, and when the present prism is cleared of accumulations and weeds, and its slopes paved, as has been repeatedly urged by the State Engineer. Or if enlarged to 9 feet depth at the locks, with 10 feet waterway, the present canal would pass the modern McDougal steel barges, or other canal-boats of ample size to do most efficient and profitable service.

For such enlargement of the Oswego, Oneida Lake and Erie Canal moderate estimates of cost have been made, and ample local water supply found.\*

The military advantage to the United States of being able to bring gun-boats through from New York Harbor is obvious. Gun-boats of 12 feet draught could readily be lightened of their armament and stores to pass the 9 foot canal and from it, through the Niagara Ship Canal, the chain of lakes could be commanded, with the effect of saving, in case of merely threatened hostilities, much greater sums than the canal would cost.

The only gun-boats which can now reach the lakes are those which may come up the St. Lawrence and the Welland Canals, by the permission of Canada, who thus has unquestioned command of all our utterly defenceless lake commerce and cities.

Simply regarded as a military work, the Niagara Ship Canal would be an economical substitute for otherwise needed defences of the Northern frontier. But unlike most military works, it would be still more valuable for peaceful commerce.

MARCH 1, 1890.

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\* Report of the late Mr. James S. Lawrence, C. E., to Major—now Colonel—John M. Wilson, Corps of Engineers, An. Rep. Ch. Engr. U. S. A., 1875, part 2, p. 566. Also, Report Mr. C. A. Ohmstead, C. E., to Canal Commissioners, 1871.