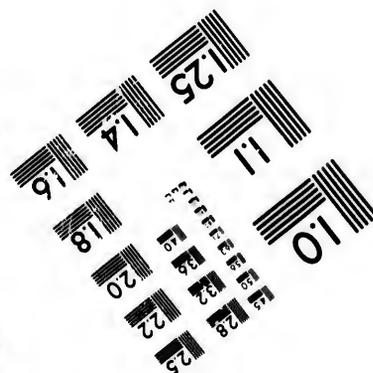
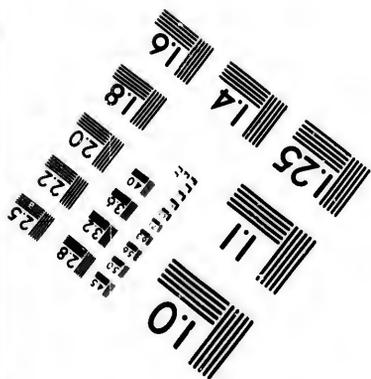
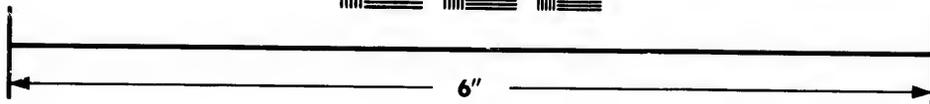
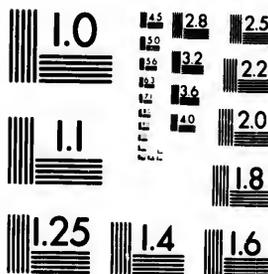


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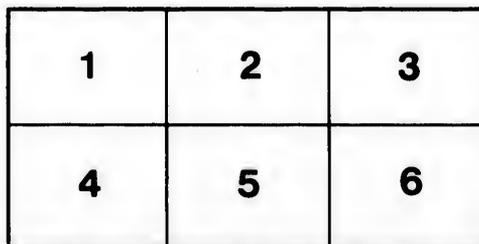
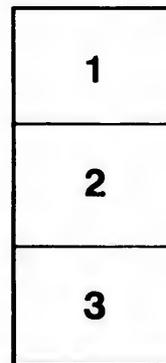
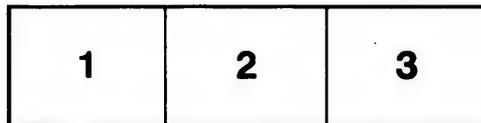
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Georgia Bay Canal

- (a) New York Times Article
- (b) letter of McLeod & Stewart
- (c) " "

1894  
1896  
1897

COMPLIMENTS OF  
McLEOD STEWART.

# The Ottawa River Canal.

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Its Advantages as a Route

FROM

Lake to Tidewater.

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REPRINT OF AN ARTICLE

WHICH APPEARED IN

**The New-York Times**

JULY 16, 1895.

*By McLeod Stewart*

1895.

# THE OTTAWA RIVER CANAL.

The transportation problem is to the fore, and that particular phase of it which has come to be realized as being of paramount importance to vast sections of the northern part of this continent, one whose solution involves the destinies of our farming communities of the West, may be summed up in the form: How is the traffic of the great lakes best and most cheaply to reach the seaboard?

In the early history of the traffic the genius of Clinton sought to solve the difficulty by the construction of the Erie Canal, an artificial waterway carried to completion in spite of great natural obstacles to its efficiency, and to this day an important factor in the grain-carrying trade in the matter of regulating rates. Canadian statesmen early appreciated the fact that the only available natural water courses from the lakes to the sea lay wholly or in great part within their territory, and, realizing in some measure the magnitude of the traffic that must eventually seek an outlet along the best and cheapest way, have from time to time spent large sums in improving the navigation of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, with the view of retaining advantages so plainly possessed.

Railways have carried to ocean ports vast and increasing quantities of grain annually, so that many have thought to see in the growth of their carrying trade the inevitable destruction of canal and river traffic. But while railroads offer some features of superiority over other modes of carriage, particularly in the matter of rapidity of transit, these are counterbalanced by the increased risk and greater expense incurred. And although railroad rates have decreased, their limit of cheapness always remains considerably higher than that of rates of carriage by water, a fact which under present conditions is all important. The crying need of the grain-raising industry, after all is said and done, is not more rapid transportation, but lower cost of conveyance of its products. "He who can most cheaply reach the markets of

the world can control the markets of the world." And if the farmers of the great American West and Canadian Northwest are to retain a foreign market for their surplus products, and are not to be hustled off and supplanted by their South American and other competitors, nothing can more concern them than to discover the very cheapest way of reaching that market.

The unparalleled growth of population, increase of wealth, and development of resources in the country bordering upon and tributary to the great lakes is but the index and presage of the greater things yet to be expected of that region. Blessed with fertility of soil, rich mineral and forest wealth, a temperate climate, and the unequalled facilities for inland navigation afforded by the lakes, with their 4,000 miles of coast line, it must rapidly become one of the great centres of wealth and population in the world. The increasing number of vessels plowing those waters indicates the immense activities that are being set in motion year by year. According to the eleventh census reports, the tonnage of the American mercantile marine on the lakes increased during 1886-90 from 634,652 tons to 826,300 tons; and while the estimated value of the vessels employed in 1886 was \$30,597,450, four years later, in 1890, it had almost doubled, amounting to \$58,128,500. This increased tonnage consisted entirely of steam propellers, of which there were constructed during the four years 96 under 1,000 tons, 50 between 1,000 and 1,500 tons, and 89 over 1,500 tons. Perhaps the trend of events in this connection cannot be better exemplified than in the history of the Sault Ste. Marie Canal. Although it affords a measure merely of the traffic between the two lakes Superior and Huron, yet on the principle *ex pede Herculem*, it will aid in giving an idea of the extent and value of the whole of which it is a part.

In the year 1878, 1,091 vessels passed through the Sault Canal, while in 1880 the number was 9,579, of which 6,587 were steamers. During a little more than the same period the annual value of the

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traffic increased from \$53,413,472 to \$83,733,327. In 1856 the registered tonnage using the canal was 101,458 tons; in 1889, 7,221,935 tons, the actual tonnage being about 300,000 tons more than that. For purpose of comparison it may be stated that in the latter year the total tonnage passing through the Suez Canal, that great international highway between Europe and the East, was 5,903,024 tons, or only 80 per cent. of that using the Sault Canal. The total tonnage of vessels engaged in the foreign trade entering the port of New-York in 1887 was 6,074,543 tons, or only 84 per cent. of the traffic between Lake Huron and the remote Superior. It has been estimated that the saving in cost of transportation effected by the Sault Canal up to 1889 over the same service performed by rail amounted to \$300,000,000.

In his message last year ex-Gov. Flower asserted with regard to the lake traffic: "In 1889 the tonnage is said to have been 10,000,000 greater than the combined entries and clearances of all the seaports of the United States, and 3,000,000 greater than the combined entries and clearances of Liverpool and London." According to Rand & McNally's atlas of the world, the total ton mileage of freight carried on the great lakes in 1889 was 15,518,360,000 ton miles, being 22.6 per cent. of the total ton mileage (68,727,223,146) of all the railways in the United States for the year ending June 30, 1889. Upward of 250,000,000 bushels of grain and mill products reached Lake Erie in 1892.

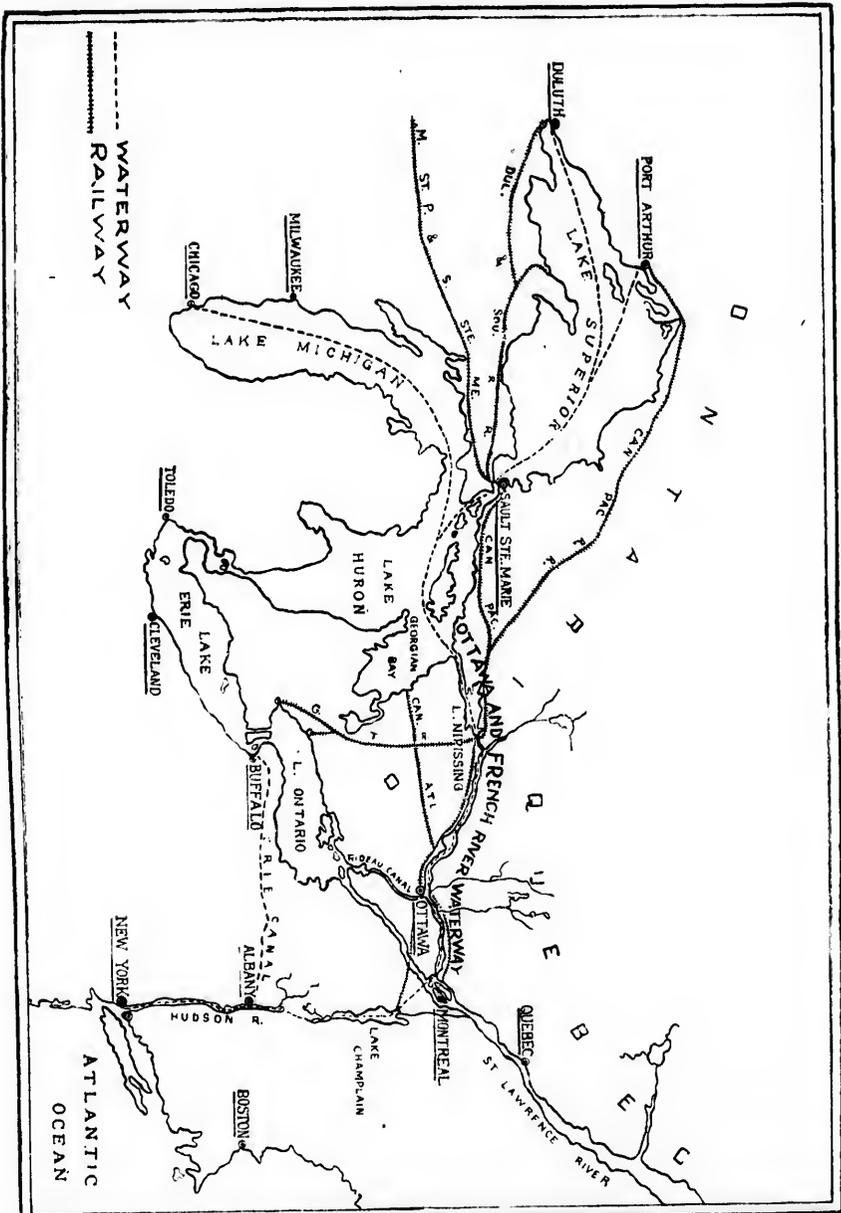
These figures, viewed in the light of commercial conditions of the day, the keen competition in the grain markets of the world, the imperious necessity for cheaper transportation in order that our farmers may successfully compete with those of other countries, and other prevailing circumstances, amply prove the question stated at the outset as one of the utmost importance. That question readily resolves itself into, What is the best practical waterway from the great lakes to the Atlantic? The proceedings at the World's Columbian Water Commerce Congress at Chicago in 1893 and at the Deep Waterways Convention at Toronto in 1894, the action of the New-York Legislature recently, and the various schemes submitted for their consideration; the activity of Canada in carrying to completion her deepening of the

St. Lawrence system of canals, and last, but not least, the action of Congress in authorizing the appointment of Commissioners to join a like number appointed by the Canadian Government to discuss international waterways, all go to show a keen realization of the urgent necessity that exists for solving the question.

Of the waterways that have been proposed, the Ottawa River route is represented by its friends as of practical solution and as likely to afford one of the shortest, best, and cheapest waterways from the lakes to tidewater.

According to surveys made, only twenty-nine miles of canal are required to open navigation from Lake Huron to Montreal, via the French and Ottawa Rivers. Several millions of dollars have already been expended on the eastern portion of the route by the Canadian Government, and, on that part canals are in operation which would merely require enlargement to furnish a deep-water channel. Thus, of the 29 miles in all, 8½ miles are already in operation, with 14 feet depth of water, and 5½ miles with 9 feet, leaving only 15 miles to be constructed to link the present navigation of the lower reaches of the Ottawa with Georgian Bay.

The distance from Georgian Bay to Montreal is 430 miles. The water route from Montreal to Liverpool is 450 miles shorter than that from New-York to Liverpool. The distance from Chicago to Montreal by the Ottawa is nearly 450 miles less than that from Chicago to New-York by the Erie Canal. This means a total saving by the Ottawa route of little short of 900 miles on the through trip to Liverpool. Practically, it is equivalent to more than 1,000 miles saved, for there are 350 miles of canal on the Erie route and only 29 on the other. Suppose two grain-laden vessels to leave Chicago together, one for each route. The one via New-York has a lake journey of 920 miles to Buffalo, the other one of only 550 miles to the French River. To reach New-York the former vessel, even were the Erie Canal enlarged to such a capacity as to render her continuance by that route possible, has yet to pass through 350 miles of canal and 145 miles of the Hudson River, 495 miles in all; while the vessel proceeding by the northerly route has only 29 miles of canal and 400 of open river and lake to traverse before reaching Montreal. Finally, the northern vessel discharges her cargo on shipboard



Map of the Proposed Ottawa and French River Waterway to Connect the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean.

450 miles nearer market than the southern one. This shows a marked advantage in every section of the journey in favor of the Ottawa route.

The following comparison of the four practicable ways of connecting the Hudson with the lakes shows the distance by the several routes:

DISTANCES—CHICAGO TO NEW-YORK.

	Canal.	Lake and River.	Total Miles.
1 Via Ottawa and French Rivers and Lake Champlain.....	120	1,228	1,348
2 Via the Erie Canal and Hudson River.....	350	1,065	1,415
3 Via Welland Canal and Erie from Oswego.....	230	1,215	1,445
4 Via the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain.....	163	1,441	1,604

Compared with its competitors as a through route from Chicago to New-York, the Ottawa will be seen to be 250 miles shorter than the St. Lawrence, and to have 43 miles less of canals. The lockage is less on the St. Lawrence, but not sufficiently to counterbalance so great a difference in length and quantity of canalizing. The route via Oswego is 100 miles longer than the Ottawa route, and has 110 miles more of canal, while the Erie route from Buffalo is 70 miles longer and has 230 miles more of canal. Counting one mile of canal navigation as fairly equivalent to three miles of open river and lake in point of expense, time occupied, &c., the Ottawa route would be equal to 1,588 miles, that via Oswego to 1,905 miles, the St. Lawrence to 1,930 miles, and the Erie to 2,115 miles of lake and river navigation.

In a report prepared under the instructions of the Canadian Government some years ago, and based on careful surveys, T. C. Clarke estimated the cost of completion of a twelve-foot channel from Georgian Bay to Montreal at \$12,000,000. Other plans have been submitted involving larger outlay. But one of the most recent estimates sets the outside figure of the necessary expenditure at \$15,000,000. This would complete the link between lake and ocean traffic, and give the shortest possible grain route. To connect New-York with that system would require the construction of a canal thirty-two miles in length, from Lake St. Louis, on the St. Lawrence, to St. Johns, on the Richelieu River, at the level of Lake Champlain, and the enlargement of sixty-six miles of canal between Lake Champlain and the Hudson. Should the Hudson River be used to a greater extent in the formation of a deep channel, so as

to lessen the amount of canal required at this point, the advantage of the Ottawa route over the Erie would be the more increased.

Surveys were made years ago for a canal connecting Lake St. Louis with Lake Champlain. In a recent article in The Albany Times-Union, Col. John B. Riley, United States Consul General at Ottawa, after careful examination of the various reports, estimates the cost of completion of a fourteen-foot channel at \$7,500,000. The estimated cost of enlargement to fourteen feet depth of the canals from Lake Champlain to the Hudson being \$15,000,000, a total expenditure of \$37,500,000 would complete and connect with New-York the Ottawa highway for water traffic from the lakes to the Eastern seaboard.

The character of the Ottawa River is such as to lend itself readily to the formation of one of the most perfect systems of inland navigation in the world. It consists almost altogether of stretches of deep and still water, interrupted by rapids and falls, which are easily overcome by locks and dams. The only work to be done is in getting from one lake to another. Thus on the route the following, besides smaller lakes, are passed through: Lake St. Louis, 13 miles in length; Lake of the Two Mountains, 25 miles; Deschênes Lake, 27 miles; Chats Lake, 19 miles; Coulonge Lake, 20 miles, and Lake Nipissing, 40 miles, making a total of over 140 miles. For the most part these lakes have a channel depth of from 20 to 30 feet at low water, very few spots having as little as 14 feet.

Long stretches of the river, also, are equal to the very best lake navigation. Such a one is that part known as Deep River, nearly 30 miles in length, very straight, from 1,000 to 2,000 feet wide, and of very great depth, said to be over 100 fathoms in some places. The shores at this point are bold, and the scenery resembles that of the Saguenay on a small scale. Everywhere, by means of dams, a slack-water navigation of sufficient depth can be more readily and cheaply obtained than on any other route. Competent engineers say that the difference in cost between an eighteen-foot channel and a nine-foot one would not be so great as in ordinary cases, and that, if made for the latter, probably 75 per cent. would be available for the former without further improvement.

Another point is that the Ottawa is a

river of steady, even flow, and not subject to sudden rise or extraordinary floods. Its rise never averages over three inches in twenty-four hours for any number of days in succession, and is commonly one inch per day, while its rise to high-water mark and subsequent fall occur every year at nearly the same dates. The most prominent characteristic of the Ottawa is its great volume, even in its upper reaches. Draining an area of 80,000 square miles, and fed by countless lakes, it furnishes water supply ample in the time of lowest water. The French and Mattawa Rivers, through which the course is continued, are of the same general character—namely, consisting of a series of lakelike expanses, separated by rapids.

The summit level is obtained by bringing to the same height Trout Lake and Lake Nipissing, the latter a fine sheet, 60 miles in length and from 15 to 30 in breadth. Thus the summit supply will be practically inexhaustible, or, as expressed by the engineer, Mr. Clarke, "sufficient for any scale of navigation and for all time to come." According to a paper read last month before the Royal Society of Canada by Dr. R. W. Ellis, LL. D., M. A., of the Geological Survey of Canada, recent examination has disclosed a line where the summit ridge, between three and four miles in length, nowhere rises more than four feet above the level of Trout Lake. The mouth of French River, according to the report of Walter Shanley affords ideal facilities for a terminal harbor. The hydrographic survey of Georgian Bay was completed in 1894, and lighthouses are already in position, marking the channel to the entrance of the river.

Experienced forwarders advocate the use on the route of strong tugs conveying fleets of three barges, each with a capacity of 50,000 bushels, and estimate that grain can be profitably carried from Lake Huron to Montreal at a rate of 1 1/4 cents per bushel, making possible a through rate from Chicago to tidewater of less than 4 cents per bushel, as against 6 1/2 by the cheapest American route, and 7 by the St. Lawrence. According to the report of the New-York Produce Exchange, 2-3 of a cent per bushel is enough to turn the current of trade, so that the Ottawa route could command a large share of the through grain trade. The items chiefly conducive to lower cost of transportation are the

great saving of distance already shown; the saving of time on the journey, estimated to be nearly five days over the Erie route, and consequently the larger number of trips possible in the season, which, for the whole Ottawa system, would be practically the same as that of the Sault Canal; decreased cost of towing from employment of the most economical form of vessel known, discharging directly over the ship's side in harbor, and the small amount of cannelling to be done. In addition to these, there is the greatest security of the route to be considered, tending to lower insurance rates, the risks being the minimum possible. Grain passing in so much shorter time through the cooler, deeper waters of this northern route would reach its destination in good condition.

As the Canadian Northwest fills up with settlers, the centre of the wheat-growing area will move steadily northward year by year. J. A. Taylor, United States Consul at Winnipeg, says in his report of 1892: "The day is near at hand when American farmers must meet such competition as they never met before, and such as few of them have ever dreamed of. The parallelogram included between longitudes 100 and 170 west of Greenwich and latitudes 50 to 70 degrees is identical in climate with and as rich in resources as an equal area in Europe included between the same meridians of latitude and extending 68 degrees east and 10 degrees west of Greenwich. The European parallelogram includes England, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, and most of Germany and Russia in Europe. Over all the territory included in the North American parallelogram the opening of Spring occurs at the same time almost to a day. When once the conditions of soil and climate which there exist are supplemented by facilities for transportation, unsurpassed if equalled by those of any other region, I believe that the Canadian Northwest will settle up with a race of hardy, intelligent, and prosperous people, and will become the granary of the world."

The Illinois and Michigan Canal, little more than a ditch, transported 5,000,000 tons of freight from 1880 to 1885. If made a ship canal, serving as the link between two great systems of navigation, it would develop an enormous traffic, the benefit of which any system of waterway to the ocean must share. Besides the Im-

mense through traffic that the advantages of the route must attract to it, much is to be expected from the development of the rich resources of the regions adjacent to the numerous and important tributaries of the Ottawa. The route passes through the heart of one of the richest lumber districts of the continent, and an extensive and valuable traffic must be afforded by the distribution of lumber and other forest products from the heavily wooded regions of Northern Ontario to the prairie States through Chicago and other markets. The pine woods of Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are fast disappearing, and the great extent of unbroken Canadian forest stretching far to the north must be more and more drawn upon. The growing importance of the pulp-wood industry will make the great quantities of spruce and poplar in that country a source of traffic and revenue; also the growth of the trade in hard woods for finishing furniture, &c.

The fact, also, that the Ottawa route will afford the most direct communication by water between the manufacturing New-England States and their market in the West must influence return traffic to it. Thus, from Chicago to ports on the east side of Lake Champlain, by the proposed route, as extended by the Caughnawaga Canal would be from 1,000 to 1,100 miles, with only 53 miles of canal, as compared with a distance of 1,300 to 1,400 miles, with no less than 420 miles of canal by the Erie route.

Tolls on traffic will not be the only source of revenue of the proposed system of canals. At such places as the Chaudière, Deschênes, Chats Falls, Rocher le Capitaine Rapids, and others magnificent water powers will be made available and can be turned to account in producing electricity for towing purposes, lighting of towns along the route, furnishing motive power for factories, and the operation of railroads.

The feasibility of opening the proposed route is beyond a question, its estimated cost within reasonable limits, and its advantages, both as a through commercial waterway and as a developer of local traffic, most marked. The Governor

General of Canada, the Earl of Aberdeen, who was a member of the Parliamentary committee on the Manchester Ship Canal, has evinced considerable interest in this waterway, as being of great benefit to the two neighboring countries. T. C. Keefer, C. E., C. M. G., ex-President of the American Society of Civil Engineers and one of the most talented of the older members of the profession in Canada, indorses the route. Walter Shanley, C. E., a well-known Canadian engineer and the successful designer and constructor of the Hoosac Tunnel, calls this great water route his "pet bantling." One of the joint editors of the Engineering News, published in New-York—A. M. Wellington, a hydraulic engineer—says about this route: "My conviction that the Ottawa River affords the best opportunity on the globe for a well-planned ship canal is a fixed one."

Some of the advantages claimed for the Ottawa route are:

It is nearly 900 miles shorter than the Erie route, with only one-tenth as much canaling, enabling a saving of five days to be made on the trip to the seaboard.

By extension to connect with the Hudson it will give the shortest waterway between Chicago and New-York, and between the New-England States and the West.

In point of security, low cost of operation, cheapness of rates possible, and character of navigation it demands consideration.

It would prove an important factor in the development of a country rich in resources.

These and other advantages lead to the belief that if completed it would develop extensive traffic from the following sources: Through grain trade, lumber traffic to Chicago and other lake ports, as well as to New-York and New-England ports; carriage of ores and other mineral products, and transportation of coal from Lake Erie ports to Northern Ontario; trade between New-England and the West, and between Ontario and Quebec and the Canadian Northwest, and local traffic constantly increasing as the fertile northern districts become settled.

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DEAR SIR

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# The Montreal, Ottawa & Georgian Bay Canal Company.

THE MOLSONS BANK CHAMBERS,

*Ottawa, February 8th. 1896.*

DEAR SIR,

I understand that His Worship the Mayor and the Council of the City of Ottawa have invited you to join the deputation which will wait on the Government on Tuesday, February 18th, for the furtherance of the project of opening the Ottawa River to navigation, and completing a through waterway along its course and that of the French River from Montreal to the Great Lakes. As it is desirable that no one to whom such invitation is addressed should neglect to take proper interest in the matter, I offer for your careful consideration a few thoughts with regard to the object for which the meeting in question has been called.

Anyone who has made even the most cursory examination of the subject is fully assured that sooner or later the Ottawa River must become one of the great commercial highways of the continent. The excellence of the route and its many and great advantages have been long recognized, and no argument is needed to show the importance and practical nature of the proposed canalization. Many causes which have operated in the past to hinder or prevent its becoming an accomplished fact have been removed by the progress of events, and there has never been a time so favorable for the prosecution of the undertaking as the present. A just appreciation of its consequence should lead every resident of the Ottawa Valley especially to actively interest himself in its promotion, the more so since failure to push it now would probably result in postponement of its completion for some time to come.

When the project was first mooted there were almost insuperable difficulties in the way to off-set the undeniable advantages the route offered. For the most part it lay through what was then a trackless wilderness known only to the Indian and the trapper, and accessible only by canoe. Supplies and material could be brought in only at enormous expense. The cost of operations was excessive as compared with to-day, because of the lack of modern engineering methods and appliances. Then apparently there was no large constituency to be served by the route when completed. All the northern part of Ontario and Western Quebec were looked upon as a barren wilderness with a climate little short of Arctic in its rigors. The north shores of Lakes Huron and Superior were almost as little known as Labrador. There was no Canadian North-West. Ontario consisted of a fringe of sparsely settled country

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extending a few miles back from the St. Lawrence and Lakes Ontario and Erie; while in the whole Ottawa region there were but two or three outposts of settlement beyond the City of Ottawa. Outside of these the hunter and trapper were sole possessors of the country. Under such circumstances did Mr. Shanly and Mr. T. C. Clarke, now President of the American Society of Civil Engineers, make their examinations of the route and report strongly and enthusiastically in its favor in spite of all drawbacks.

Now the whole route is easily and cheaply accessible, and the cost of execution of the work thereby materially reduced. Towns have sprung up along its line. New, and theretofore unknown resources have been developed, and only await the advent of cheap transportation to give rise to industries of great magnitude and supporting a large population. Last year the Canadian North-West raised over 30,000,000 bushels of grain, and our prairie country is on the eve of a progress in development more rapid than any it has hitherto known. The Rainy River District is to-day attracting the attention of capitalists the world over, and many predict that the mines of that region will prove as rich as those of South Africa. Along the "North Shore," and stretching far eastward into Quebec is being opened one of the richest mineral belts on the continent. The immense forests of the Ottawa region are of annually increasing value. Moreover, it has been learned that the whole of this region has a fine, rigorous climate, capable of producing the best type of physical manhood as well as all the principal products of the temperate zone. And that, interspersed among the ridges of rock there are many intervals of fertile land well adapted for agriculture, which at the present time are being rapidly occupied by settlers, who find the conditions precisely those most favorable to profitable farming, the operations of mining and lumbering on the adjacent barren lands affording a ready market at the farmer's very door for all he can raise. New industries too have given new value to the products of the country. Thus the use of nickel in ship-building gives the Sudbury deposits inestimable value. Pulp-wood is a commodity rapidly increasing in commercial importance, and the whole continent must depend on our northern forests for supplies of it.

Thus the need and demand for the canalization of the Ottawa are vastly greater than they were even a few years ago. Than the present, no more auspicious time for the undertaking of the work could be found. Not only is Canada regarded more favorably than ever before as a field for investment, but capital is better disposed towards this particular form of investment than at any time for years. If the opportunity to open up the Ottawa is allowed to pass, it is problematical when such a nice conjunction of circumstances in its favor will again be found. Either the success or failure of a deep waterway by any other route from the Lakes to the sea would seriously affect its prospects, the former because it would secure trade which the Ottawa, if constructed first would be sure of gaining, and the latter for the reason that it would cause capital to avoid enterprises of the kind without any just discrimination. It is probable that the Deep Waterways Commission may meet in Ottawa at some time during their investigations. It will be most important that the claims of the Ottawa route to recognition be not then passed over. Everything indicates that NOW is the time for the Ottawa River to be opened for traffic. Then, in addition to developing local resources of great richness, we will have another grand highway of commerce for the building up of national prosperity.

The following have been given among other reasons in favor of the immediate prosecution of the work :

*First.*—The direct benefit to be gained by the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec owing to the opening up of an immense tract of country the future of which is practically dependent upon cheap transportation for its bulky and heavy products, and the consequent increase of value of the extensive crown lands of those provinces.

*Second.*—The gain to the Canadian North-West of obtaining a route for the shipping of its grain crops which will enable the farmers to reach the Old World markets at a much lower cost for transportation charges than at present or by any other practicable route.

*Third.*—The market to be opened up for the manufactures of Ontario and Quebec by the development along the line of the route of a return trade to the North-West.

*Fourth.*—The advantage to the lumber trade of having a western as well as an eastern outlet by water, and direct access to the market afforded by the treeless prairies of the Western States.

*Fifth.*—The impetus which would be given to the commerce of the northern part of this continent by the opening of an alternative route which would have so important an influence on freight rates.

*Sixth.*—The stimulating effect of its existence would have upon the mining industry of Canada.

*Seventh.*—Its making available the immense natural forces in the water-powers of the Ottawa River and its tributaries, which, when utilized in manufacturing, milling production of electric energy &c., will add millions of dollars to the national wealth.

*Eighth.*—The Ottawa route is the only possible *all-Canadian* route from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic.

*Ninth.*—Owing to its sheltered position and distance from the international boundary, a through waterway on the Ottawa to the Lakes would in case of war be of the highest military importance and prove of great value as a means of defence and of protection for our commerce.

An undertaking of such nature appeals to every Canadian on patriotic grounds and should have the hearty support of every influential man in the community. As the action which may be taken by the Dominion Government on this occasion is certain to have a very important bearing, it is to be hoped that you can both be present, and exert your influence, towards bringing about a speedy accomplishment of an object which must approve itself to everyone interested in the welfare and prosperity of our country.

Very respectfully yours,

**McLEOD STEWART.**

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OTTAWA, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1897.

DEAR SIR, —

The project of opening the Ottawa River to navigation, and connecting it with the Great Lakes has occupied my earnest attention for sometime past. Not only have I personally devoted my time and means to the furtherance of that object, but my efforts have been warmly seconded by a number of gentlemen of public spirit throughout Canada from Halifax to Calgary and Edmonton. I, and those associated with me in the promotion of this enterprise, believe it to be one of very great value towards the development of Canadian resources, and the extension of Canadian commerce, and look upon it as of special importance as a feeder to the St. Lawrence River route, and therefore calculated to build up the trade of Montreal and Quebec, and all the towns in any measure dependent upon those centres.

The opening up of this channel will give the advantage of cheap water transportation through the heart of a country larger than all New England, and superior to it in richness and variety of resources. The valley of the Ottawa, with a superficial area of more than 60,000 sq. miles, contains the largest depôt of white pine timber in existence. It possesses vast quantities of spruce, the basis of the pulp making industry. Our forests of hardwood, suitable for house finishing, furniture and other manufactures, are extensive and valuable. There are inexhaustible deposits of iron, phosphates, mica, graphite, asbestos, serpentine, galena, silver, copper, nickel, marble and other mineral products. We have also over the whole area a large proportion of cultivable and grazing lands, fertile and excellently watered, and so situated with regard to the occurrence of minerals and timber as to enjoy advantageous home markets and afford the best conditions for that species of mixed farming which everywhere proves the most profitable. The climate is unsurpassed for healthfulness, and is everywhere favorable to the growth of all products of the temperate zone.

The Ottawa Valley, in its thousands of lakes acting as natural reservoirs, and in the grand rapids of the Ottawa River and its numerous tributaries, possesses water power far surpassing in the aggregate that of New England, and is better located than New England, both for grinding western grain, and for manufacturing for domestic markets. For foreign commerce New England has the advantage of an ocean frontage; for domestic trade the Ottawa Valley is favored by its situation on the shortest line of communication with the greatest system of internal navigation in the world.

To speak of the immense possibilities arising from the application of these water-powers to the production of electricity and its use in the many spheres modern science has found for it would extend this letter beyond reasonable bounds.

That the influx of a population into this great tract of country westward and north-westward from Montreal, such as it is capable of sustaining, and the growth of various industries induced, would add to the importance of Montreal, both as an exporting point, and as a distributing centre, goes without saying.

While the development of new territory, the extension of commerce, and increase of the natural activities of the country are of primary importance, for other reasons the project is of national interest. Not least is the creation of a strictly *national* waterway, free from outside interference or control, wholly within our own territory, and ensuring us under all circumstances an independent means of internal communication. It will also form another link between Montreal and the lower St. Lawrence on the one hand, and the Great Lakes and the North West on the other, proving a secondary route for through traffic of great value to producers and shippers.

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The Ottawa River navigation has met with some slight opposition arising from the mistaken idea that it was being urged as a competitor of the St. Lawrence Canals, intended to supplant them, or to do away with the necessity for their enlargement. Nothing could be further from the attitude of its promoters who do not ask that the St. Lawrence Canals be deprived of one cent of public money which should right fully go to them.

Under the financial proposals made by the Montreal, Ottawa and Georgian Bay Canal Company until the canals are completed, approved, and in operation the only responsibility the Government are asked to assume is that of trustee of the Company's money to be used in paying interest to bondholders as the same falls due. After that period, say six years from date, the Government will be asked for an annual bonus of say \$250,000. In the meantime every step of the work will have been performed under direct supervision of the Government Engineers, and to their satisfaction. The time when the Government of Canada can be called upon to defray any part of the expense of construction, whether the canals are a financial success or otherwise, is under the arrangement deferred for twenty-five years. At the end of that period (or sooner if the public interest so demands) they may assume control of the works by paying for them at a valuation to be determined. In the meantime the deepening of the St. Lawrence Canals will have been long completed.

This undertaking should be carried on by a syndicate of capitalists for the reason that the Government, while giving its moral support, will then have a free hand to carry on other needed public works. Also because construction work can be more rapidly and cheaply done by a Company; and because the public interests can be effectually guarded by having plans of all works subject to Government approval, and all payments to contractors made only upon the joint certificates of Government and Company Engineers.

In our opinion, work on the Ottawa as well as on the St. Lawrence ought to be pushed vigorously and at once. The Americans are keenly alive to the value of handling the enormous traffic, and are making every effort to retain the whole of it for United States carriers to United States ports. While to this end they contemplate a deep waterway in the future, they are not neglecting to deepen the Erie barge canal to nine feet. And, following their example, we ought to neglect no advantage that we possess. If they are beforehand with us it will be a difficult matter for Canada to retain that supremacy in the carrying trade of the northern part of this continent that Nature has fitted her to achieve. The traffic to which we are fairly entitled by our position is sufficient already to fully employ both the Ottawa and St. Lawrence routes. These latter are really complementary, instead of competitive, both having Montreal for their terminus. The true rivalry is with American routes carrying trade to New York.

The shortness of the Ottawa route, and the very low rates at which freight can be carried by it, ensure that as soon as opened it will gain and bring to Montreal and Quebec a share of the through traffic that now goes to New York. Its local traffic also will be important and far in excess of that of the St. Lawrence Canals. And every ton of through freight moved on the Ottawa River as well as every ton of increased production of the Ottawa Valley seeking export, will necessarily go to Montreal or Quebec for an outlet, not being liable to be diverted at numerous points, like the traffic on the St. Lawrence Canals which experiences exhaustive drains at Buffalo, Oswego and Ogdensburg.

There is reason to believe that \$15,000,000 will cover the actual cost of construction if done by a company. That is not one-tenth of the cost of a ship canal for ocean-going vessels even by the St. Lawrence to the Lakes, and not more than one-twentieth what it would cost for such a canal by the cheapest route between the Lakes and New York. Granting even that at some future time ocean-going vessels will pass by Montreal, and take on their cargoes at Toronto, Chicago, Duluth and Fort William for the present and for many years to come the enlarged St. Lawrence Canals and the Ottawa waterway will meet all the needs of Canadian commerce at a very moderate expenditure.

The whole matter resolves itself into one or two questions:—If this waterway, through the heart of our own country, owing to present favorable conditions, can be constructed without interference with other needed public works, and without recourse to the public treasury, except to the extent of a small annual bonus

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mistaken idea after completion, and can be completed in a short time at comparatively slight cost, is it worth making an effort to obtain? Would such a feeder and alternative through route tend to increase the commerce of Montreal and Quebec and to benefit the great St. Lawrence waterway? Are its prospective effects in developing new territory and increasing production and national wealth, worth trying to secure?

I trust you will favor me in a few words with your impression of the enterprise. I take this means of addressing you being desirous of obtaining at first hand the views of practical and prominent business men.

Whether you agree with me as to the importance of this waterway or not, I hope to have an immediate reply.

Respectfully yours,

*J. W. Lewis Stewart*  
*Chairman of Committee*

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