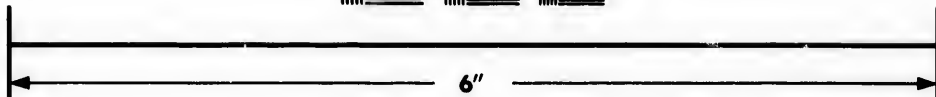
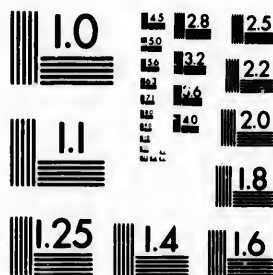


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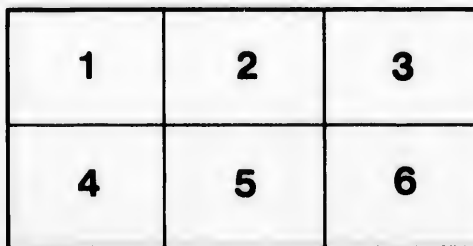
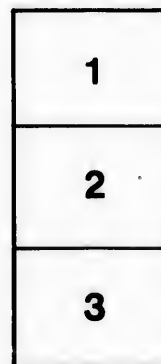
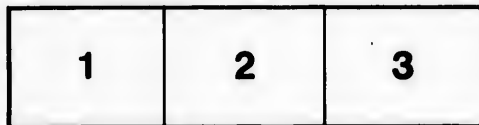
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OTTAWA, 23RD FEBRUARY, 1897.

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 rightfully 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

after completing effort to obtain Montreal and developing new

I trust you addressing you

Whether reply.

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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