

Advocates Georgian Bay Ship Canal.

In a letter to the Financial Post of July 23rd, Mr. George Moberly takes up the defence of the Georgian Bay Canal and urges that it is needed to improve the transportation facilities between the east and the west. Mr. Moberly is replying to an article arguing against the construction of the canal which appeared in a previous issue of The Post, and in the course of his letter says:—"The canal is 430 miles long from Georgian Bay to Montreal and 316 miles of this is free channel from 300 feet to 1,000 feet and over in width, and of full depth of 22 feet, and over, and there is nothing to prevent a vessel from going at any speed she chooses. The time of going through the canal, as carefully calculated by competent engineers who made the surveys and estimates for the whole work is 70 hours and not 200—which makes a very considerable difference."

The writer says, "Even if built, it would not by any means absorb the whole of the freight business between Montreal and Fort William and that freight originating west of Montreal, and the Ottawa River, that is, at Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Ogdensburg, Oswego, Rochester, Lake Erie ports and more westerly points would still be carried through the present route." Quite true, therefore by his own showing the canal will not interfere with quite a considerable business, but on the other hand does the writer suppose Canada is going to stand still in her commercial development, and that all the business he thus speaks of, a mere bagatelle in comparison with that now rapidly growing up in the north and northwest, will not affect the question of the usefulness of the canal one iota?

"I can remember being at Sault Ste. Marie when there was no canal on either the American or Canadian side and look at it at present where now the Western country, particularly in Canada, is only on the verge of its future expansion,—so that if we want to keep the trade we must be up and doing, and not be satisfied to sit still and decry such important works as the Georgian Bay Canal, which even at its best can only handle a portion of the vastly increasing business."

The writer of the said article seems to put a good deal of stress on the two following matters, namely, "Danger of damage" and "returning empty." Of course there is the usual danger in going through locks and no more, and as to returning light, they have to do so now to a great extent. As the Western business increases, however, and there are more vessels employed, there will be a greater number returning light—and unless a very large amount of money is spent in enlarging the canals all the way to Montreal the larger vessels must unload somewhere in the upper lakes. Now the proposed canal is to be of sufficient capacity to take in a vessel 600 feet long — and there is no reason why it should not be made 700 feet, if thought necessary, so that any vessel of the largest size on the lakes could go all the way to Montreal or Quebec if required — but what is to prevent the unloading of vessels at the mouth of the French River into barges built and adapted for the purpose? The facilities for unloading could easily be made such that the largest freighter could be unloaded in a very short time by a series of floating elevators—these appliances would, as the contingency arose, be ready to meet it, as can be seen in the great ore unloading ports of the United States.

The State of New York is spending \$100,000,000 in enlarging and deepening the Erie Canal, which even when finished will only be a large sized ditch in comparison with the Georgian Bay Canal, and the reason they are going to this great expenditure is to counteract as much as possible the effect our canal will have on the up-lake trade. They know quite well and recognize in a manner our people do not seem to do—the great possibilities of business coming this way in case the canal here is built, and New York is quite alive to her business interests. It will therefore be a very important contest between Canada and the United States as to which country will divert the greatest portion of the western business going east to the seaboard through its borders.

Outside of all questions of commerce, we want a water route through Canada as far as possible from the frontier, and the Georgian Bay Canal will supply this important requirement. Contingencies may arise which would make this avenue very necessary."

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