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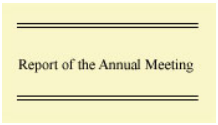

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A Quarter-Century of the History of the St. Lawrence Waterway, 1849-1874

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CANADA'S BID FOR THE TRAFFIC OF THE MIDDLE WEST

A QUARTER-CENTURY OF THE HISTORY OF THE ST. LAWRENCE WATERWAY 1849-1874

By SAMUEL MCKEE, JR.

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Those readers who are at all familiar with the history of the St. Lawrence Waterway will understand why the quarter-century from 1849 to 1874 has been singled out for treatment as a period of especial significance and interest. For 1849 marked the first full year's operation of the new canal system which Canada hoped would divert the traffic of the American West from the Erie Canal to the St. Lawrence. By 1874, or thereabouts, even the staunchest supporters of the Canadian route were forced to recognize that the commerce of the West still moved mostly through American channels; and plans were already under way for a new and enlarged St. Lawrence Canal system. The first cycle of the improved St. Lawrence Waterway was complete—the system completed in 1848 was about to be replaced by a newer and better one.

In the spring of 1848, after a strenuous effort which had begun more than a quarter-century before, and at a cost which for a country with limited financial resources was quite staggering, Canada at last had a navigable waterway which, stretching for nearly two thousand miles from the Atlantic to the head of Lake Michigan, reached clear into the very heart of the North American Continent. Moreover, the St. Lawrence Waterway was no mere barge canal, like that shameful violation of nature, the contemptible "Erie ditch," but a ship channel, with canals and locks capable of passing vessels up to a nine-foot draft. And in those days, when most ocean vessels drew only sixteen or eighteen feet of water, a ship with a draft of nine feet was fairly good-sized.

These canals and locks which had cost Canada so dearly constituted but a small part of the entire route between Lake Erie and Montreal. Above and below, of course, there always had been clear sailing, and even in between, there were great stretches of fine deep water. The completion of the enlarged Welland and the succession of canals in the St. Lawrence was going to make it possible for ships to pass the obstructions which for so long had prevented the St. Lawrence from achieving the commercial greatness so confidently predicted for it.

Long before there had ever been an Erie Canal, before there had been any teeming, swiftly growing West, Governor Simcoe had probably voiced the sentiments of many, when, in 1794, he stated quite emphatically that there was no greater fallacy than the assertion that the trade of the Great Lakes with Europe must pass through the eastern states rather than by the St. Lawrence.[1] And now, in 1849, more than half a century later, the obstacles of nature in the St. Lawrence having been overcome, the great test was at hand, and, on both sides of the border, the champions of the Canadian route eagerly waited for it to wrest the western trade from the Erie.

[1]E. A. Cruikshank, *Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe* (Toronto, 1923-31), III, 60.

There have been many since, and no doubt there were many then, who said that the St. Lawrence system from the very beginning never had a chance in its competition with the Erie. They were referring chiefly, of course, to the fact that in 1846 the Canadian route lost for good the great advantage of preferential treatment in the British market for grain and flour shipped from Canada. It is generally agreed that had it not been for the preferential treatment accorded to Canadian shipments, the colourful transportation route of the St. Lawrence, with its perilous and expensive rapids and portages, would probably have attracted very little American commerce. Presumably, although the evidence on this is neither clear nor convincing, Canada, in planning its canal system had counted upon a continued enjoyment of the benefits of imperial preference. The new canals were merely intended to provide added strength to the St. Lawrence in its competition with the Erie. Then, as we all know, in 1846, the repeal of the Corn Laws deprived the St. Lawrence route of what had been its principal asset.

The outer world seemed to be raining cruel blows on Canada and its great river at this time, for it was only the year before, in 1845 to be exact, that the United States passed its first Bonding Act, and followed it with others, whereby Canadian exports and imports could move across the United States duty free. It is to be noted that shortly after this passage of the Bonding Act had removed an obstacle to the use of American routes for shipments into and out of Canada, the repeal of the Corn Laws had taken away an incentive to using the St. Lawrence route.

That these were severe blows to the friends of the Canadian route could not be denied, but, never mind, they seemed to say, the superiority of the St. Lawrence would assert itself. In this conviction, they did not waver for a long time. Repeatedly they pointed out that commerce was an unfeeling thing, utterly without sentimental attachments, which insisted upon following the route which was the shortest, the quickest, and the cheapest—in other words, the best, as viewed from every angle.

As late as 1850, William Hamilton Merritt, whose championship of the Canadian route had long been traditional, was still, publicly at least, far from pessimistic in his outlook upon the future competition between the St. Lawrence and the Erie.[2] So also was Thomas C. Keefer, who, from the average annual increase of 20 per cent from 1839 to 1849 over the Erie Canal, worked out a chart for the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals which indicated that the tonnage through them in 1860 would be seven and eight times as much as it had been in 1849.[3]

Belief in the vast superiority of the St. Lawrence, then as now, was not confined to Canadians. West of New York State, which for obvious reasons was loyal to the Erie, Americans in the lake ports and the surrounding country savagely denounced the alleged monopoly of western commerce by New York State and the Erie Canal. Their only hope of relief from this intolerable vassalage, according to the westerners, lay in the St. Lawrence. "This great and natural outlet of the lakes," they said, "seems designed by Providence as the great commercial channel by which the

[2] *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works,* 1849.
[3] *Ibid.*

immense commerce of the lakes should find its way to the Atlantic ocean and the world."[4]

Indeed the American states bordering the Great Lakes seemed to be literally spellbound by the evidences of their astonishing growth. Apparently public and private agencies on the American side of the lakes just loved to assemble a bewildering mass of statistics reflecting their phenomenal increase in population and production, especially of grain and pigs.[5] The only fly in the ointment, they seemed to think, was their dependence for transportation upon that miserable Erie ditch. Once ships could go all the way from the lakes to Europe by way of the St. Lawrence, then things would really boom in the American Middle West. Incidentally, the unfettered enthusiasm of the West for the St. Lawrence route must have been a rather sorry joke for Canada, that is if the latter could see any humour in a situation in which the westerners were shouting the praises of the St. Lawrence to the house tops, while at the same time their enormous commerce continued to move largely through American channels in an ever-increasing volume.

Notwithstanding the unshaken confidence of the American Middle West in the St. Lawrence route, there is little doubt that even before 1850 Canadians were already sensing that the new canal system was not going to live up to all that had been predicted for it. And before many more years had passed what had been an uneasy suspicion became a plain and unpleasant fact. That the Canadian canals had failed of their purpose, Merritt admitted as early as 1851 in an official report as Chief Commissioner of Public Works. Placing the blame on the repeal of the British Corn Laws, the United States Bonding Act, and other lesser causes, he frankly stated that a reduction in the cost of transportation had not been attended by a corresponding increase of traffic. "The greater part of which," he added, "is daily being directed through other channels to the port of New York."[6]

Merritt's rather discouraging appraisal of the situation was based upon the navigation figures for 1850 and the previous years. The figures for 1851 and thereafter, however, were somewhat more favourable to the Canadian route.[7] Through the Welland Canal, for example, the 399,600 tons of 1850 increased to 691,627 tons in 1851, and, by 1860, to 944,084 tons. The increase of traffic on the St. Lawrence Canals was about in the same proportions: the 288,103 tons of 1850 jumped to 450,400 tons in 1851, and to 733,596 tons in 1860. That traffic on the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals should have increased approximately two and a half times during the decade might, offhand, appear very gratifying, but it far from measured up to Keefer's predictions of more than sevenfold. Moreover, the original heavy expense of building the canal system would probably never have been approved save for the confident expectation of substantial toll collections which, of course, with the ruinously small volume of

[4]*Senate Miscellaneous Document*, no. 111, 31st Cong., 1st Sess.

[5]Chicago especially was addicted to looking at itself in a statistical mirror. A typical expression of western sentiment is in the *Proceedings of the National Ship-Canal Convention at the City of Chicago, 1863* (Chicago, 1863), 48-51.

[6]*Report of the Commissioners of Public Works*, 1850, appendix D, statement no. 2.

[7]The figures are to be found in the annual *Reports on Trade and Navigation of Canada* in the appendix volumes of the *Journals of the Legislative Assembly*.

traffic, fell far short of the hoped-for amount. Furthermore, even though the canal system was a financial failure, this increased traffic of a million tons annually might have been not without its satisfactions but for the galling fact that during this same period the annual traffic on the Erie had risen over a million and a half tons.

Throughout the fifties, the failure of the St. Lawrence Waterway to come up to expectations was a subject for investigation and conjecture. With the repeal of the Corn Laws it had been widely recognized that the Navigation Laws, which restricted foreign shipping in Canadian waters, were an annoying and no longer defensible remnant of the old colonial system which had largely been discarded. Then too, it seemed highly desirable to permit the use of the St. Lawrence by American vessels, since any navigable waterway which aimed to get a substantial part of United States foreign commerce could hardly look for success if American vessels were excluded. Both these handicaps to the Canadian route were removed not so many years after its completion. The Navigation Acts were repealed in 1849, and the Reciprocity Treaty which went into effect in 1854 gave American vessels the right to use the St. Lawrence with its system of canals. Unfortunately though, nothing seemed to go right with the St. Lawrence Waterway. Reciprocity had not been in operation very long before it was unmistakably plain that its net effect had not been to divert American commerce through Canadian channels but *vice versa*. Everything seemed to work to the advantage of the Erie.

In retrospect, we can see that there were disadvantages, practically insuperable, under which the St. Lawrence laboured in her competition with the Erie and other American routes. Some of these, from the outset, such as the superiority of the port of New York, should have been as plain as the nose on your face, and probably they were, but either they were not taken seriously enough, or else it was thought that they could be overcome. The phenomenal development of the steam railway on land and the steamship on water, however, could only have been anticipated by something approaching a stroke of pure genius. Yet in different ways the railway and the steamship were both very harmful to the St. Lawrence, the one as a rival carrier, and the other as an influence which in the long run, with the development of bigger and heavier ships, made greater canal depths a necessity. There were other minor difficulties under which the Canadian route operated, such as inferior credit facilities, unfavourable American legislation (the exclusion of all foreign shipping from the American coastwise trade, for example), and discriminatory American customs rules, but these would have been annoying trifles, no more harmful than biting flies to a healthy horse, were it not for the other far more serious handicaps.

The most fateful influence on the rivalry of the American and Canadian routes during this period was undoubtedly the rise of the railways, although its importance was not wholly appreciated at the time. Years later it could be seen that while the two great waterways were fighting it out, the railways ran off with the prize. As everyone knows, so far as freight was concerned, the railroads originally were regarded largely as portages between navigable waterways. As early as 1851, however, T. C. Keefer noted the competition of the railways with the waterways for the carriage of flour. He commented that the value of flour in proportion to its bulk was the explanation. The railroads would compete also for other

valuable and easily transported commodities, he thought, but would not attempt competition with waterways for the carriage of cheap and bulky articles like grain and lumber.[8] Others also remarked upon the growing competition of the railways,[9] and by 1864, a report of the United States Secretary of the Treasury stated that improvements had made the railroads equal to the waterways as carriers. At the time, the New York State railways were steadily engrossing a larger and larger proportion of the total traffic of the state.[10]

A discussion of the reasons for New York's rise to supremacy among North Atlantic ports is not called for here.[11] Suffice it to say that her premier position was attributable to a combination of many favourable conditions, among them, lower freight rates to Europe, superior credit and marketing facilities, and pre-eminence as a distributing centre for the whole Atlantic seaboard. Foreign and domestic commerce alike tended to gravitate to the city at the mouth of the Hudson. New York's superiority as a port was usually more than sufficient to offset any competitive weakness of the transportation routes serving her.

Canadians fully realized the advantages given by the Port of New York to transportation routes which used it as a terminus in their competition with the St. Lawrence. In competing for the export of the West it obviously would not make any difference that rates from Chicago to Quebec or Montreal were much less than from Chicago to New York, if the freight rates from the St. Lawrence port to Europe more than ate up the difference. Of the substantially lower freight rates from New York City to Europe there was no question. The *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works* for 1856 pointed out that to transport a ton of wheat or flour from Chicago to Quebec cost $4.77, whereas it cost $5.56 to send it to New York by the Erie Canal; but to send it from Quebec to Liverpool cost $9.00 as compared with the rate of only $5.00 from New York. It can be seen that the cost of grain shipments from Chicago to Liverpool, via New York, was $10.56 per ton, whereas, via Quebec, it was $13.77.[12]

In an effort to offset New York's advantages as a port, vigorous efforts were made to improve the port facilities of both Quebec and Montreal. For example, the shallow channel between Quebec and Montreal, which had been a serious handicap to the latter, was progressively deepened as the size of ocean ships steadily increased. Lighthouses were established in an effort to reduce the high insurance rates by reducing the dangers of navigating the St. Lawrence. Steamship lines were subsidized for the maintenance of year-round regular service with Europe—the St. Lawrence ports being used in the navigation season, and Portland, Maine, connected with Montreal by rail, in the winter. Tug companies, above and below Montreal, were also subsidized by the government. It was even argued by Sir John Rose, in 1859, in the *Annual Report* on the Public Works, that the closing of the St. Lawrence by ice for five months every winter no

[8] *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works*, 1850, appendix C.

[9] See, for example, the remarks of Sir John Rose, in his *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works*, 1859.

[10] Secretary of the Treasury, *Statistics of the Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the United States* (Washington, 1864), 120.

[11] The subject is admirably surveyed in Robert G. Albion's, *The Rise of New York Port, 1815-1860* (New York and London, 1939).

[12] *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works*, 1856, 59, appendix A.

longer particularly mattered since the railway over the Victoria Bridge linked Montreal to Portland, which, in turn, had year-round steamer connections with Europe. All these improvements undoubtedly made better ports of Quebec and Montreal, but they did not bring ships in sufficient numbers to reduce the high freight rates as compared with New York.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that for several years after the famous voyage of the *Dean Richmond* in 1856, high hopes were entertained for the development of a direct trade between lake cities and Europe. Leaving Chicago on July 17, the *Dean Richmond* reached Liverpool the following September 17, after travelling a total distance of 4,068 miles. Hailed as a great achievement in both the English and American press, it was hoped that a permanent through trade would develop as a result. One American paper in the West is reported to have enthusiastically declared that after the *Dean Richmond*'s voyage nobody could doubt that the demonstrated practicability of direct shipment from Chicago to Europe would eventually transfer western commerce to the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence. "It virtually makes our inland lakes," it solemnly observed, "the Mediterranean Sea of North America, and Chicago becomes the Alexandria of modern times. It peels off the littoral rind of the New World at a stroke—and splits the ripe apple of the continent to its core. Ocean commerce will follow that entering wedge."[13]

If we bear in mind the difference of tone between American and English journalism at that time, the *London Times,* it would seem, was fully as excited in its comments upon the voyage of the *Dean Richmond,* characterizing it as meaning nothing less than a revolution in the grain trade. "The St. Lawrence," it said in an editorial, "backed, as it is, by that magnificent series of inland seas, ought to be the high road from Europe into the heart of the North American Continent."[14]

At first it looked as if the enthusiasm was not without foundation, for from 1857 to 1858, thirteen ships sailed for England from Great Lakes ports, and the next year there were sixteen. At the same time ships were entering the Great Lakes from England, seven in one year, and ten in another. Thereafter, however, the direct trade between Europe and the lake ports declined. As to any revolutionary effect upon the grain trade, the *United States Census of 1860* pointed out that of the 125 vessels clearing from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean since the sailing of the *Dean Richmond* in 1856, only three or four had been loaded with grain.[15]

Conditions on the Erie Canal had changed substantially since the St. Lawrence system had first been projected. For one thing, the steady and enormous increases of traffic over the Erie led to its enlargement by 1851. Then too, the rivalry of other routes, both rail and water, had led to a reduction of the Erie tolls. Notwithstanding these changes on the Erie, the cost of transporting commodities from the interior to the seaboard continued to be much less by way of the rival St. Lawrence route. But alas, as has been mentioned already, this relative cheapness of the Canadian route did not help it very much.

In 1860, the Canadian government embarked upon a policy which was

[13] *St. Paul Advertiser,* quoted in J. Disturnel, *Trip through the Lakes* (1857), 191-2.

[14] *The Times,* London, Sept. 27, 1856.

[15] *U.S. Census Report for 1860,* p. cliii, *Agriculture of the U.S. in 1860.*

designed to entice American ships down the St. Lawrence. An Order-in-Council instructed the return of 90 per cent of the tolls collected at the Welland to vessels which subsequently entered the St. Lawrence Canals or a Canadian port. Tolls on the St. Lawrence Canals were abolished entirely. If the measure did not succeed in inducing American ships to use the St. Lawrence Canals—and it did not—at least it compelled American ships which were using only this link in the chain of Canadian canals on their way from one American port to another to pay a proportionately higher rate for the privilege. American interests, as a matter of fact, angrily denounced the refunding of the tolls as a discriminatory measure. Not because of their protests, but because the repeal of the tolls had lost much needed revenue without apparently diverting traffic from the Erie, the tolls, in 1863, were restored to approximately the previous rates.[16]

The American Civil War which closed the Mississippi to navigation is the obvious explanation for the substantial increase on both the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals in 1861 and 1862. An increase of 200,000 tons on each main division of the Canadian system from 1860 to 1862 was gratifying, although here again the pleasure was diminished somewhat by the fact that during the same period traffic on the Erie had increased a million tons. Another comparative figure is that pertaining solely to American grain and flour. In round numbers the shipments down the St. Lawrence increased 4,000,000 bushels from 1856 to 1862, while those through the Erie increased by 25,000,000 during the same period. The year 1862 was the all-time peak for the Erie, the traffic of which steadily declined thereafter, whereas the Canadian canals, on the other hand, tended to hold their gains.[17]

Before the Civil War, Canada had become accustomed to the reports of experts on the St. Lawrence Waterway. The fact of its failure, as measured by original expectations, was undeniable, and the reasons therefor were more or less plain. The superiority of the port of New York, the rise of the railroads, the lack of return cargoes, and all the other factors, major or minor, depending upon how you cared to view them, were fairly well known. Clearly, the question was what to do about it. Actually, aside from the necessary repairs on the canals, locks, and harbours, very little was done about it until several years after Confederation. That this should be the case is easily understood. The canals in the St. Lawrence and the Welland had been very useful to many Canadians and Americans, and they had not been without their value to Canada as a whole, but they certainly had not achieved the purpose for which they had been built. Before Canada was ready to embark upon a new project for an improved waterway, either by enlarging the then existing one, or by building another elsewhere, the disappointment over the old one had to wear off.

Nevertheless, there was much discussion both of alternative routes and of enlarging the locks and canals on the old one. No matter how adequate the latter had been when built, they had undoubtedly become too small. What good was it to talk grandly of a ship canal, if a steadily increasing

[16] *Canada, Sessional Papers,* 1863, appendix no. 2, *Report on Trade and Navigation.*

[17] *Ibid.*

number of the lake vessels, especially the highly important grain ships, were too big to use it? At first suggestions for enlargement were confined to the Welland, but gradually it was recognized that any enlargement should include the St. Lawrence Canals as well.

Naturally, the importance of the western trade to New York, both city and state, was fully appreciated by Canada, even if the successful efforts of her rival to the south to retain the western trade for herself were vaguely regarded almost as a selfish and unscrupulous violation of the laws of nature. Canadians looked to the western states for moral support and political assistance in what was alleged to be their common struggle against the greedy transportation monopoly of New York.[18] Nor was the American West unresponsive to the Canadian advances. Then as now, Canadian belief in the ultimate triumph and victory of the St. Lawrence did not hold a candle to the ideas on the same subject of certain individuals in the American lake cities. For instance, in 1864, William Bross, a Chicagoan, felt so strongly about the matter, that more than once, as he himself said, he was impelled to remark: "It is true that national pride and immense capital, and the beaten track of commerce are on the side of New York; but God and nature are stronger than all these, and let any intelligent man compare the 'Erie ditch' with the mighty St. Lawrence . . . and he cannot doubt for a moment on which side the immutable laws of commerce will decide the contest."[19]

Bross's remark was called forth by a query as to the desirability of a Georgian Bay Canal. At the time, that is, in 1864, there were four routes competing for the construction of a waterway from Lake Huron through Canadian territory.[20] The valley of Lake Simcoe was common to three of these routes, and the fourth was to follow the old fur-trade route of the Ottawa River and Lake Nipissing. The supporters of the last-named had an interesting suggestion for a return cargo, lack of which so severely handicapped the St. Lawrence route. They said that the country through which the route would pass was covered with timber good only for fuel, which could be used as a return cargo. The trade in firewood at Chicago alone, they said, had amounted to $500,000 in 1862. The supply of timber for fuel in the Ottawa country was practically unlimited, and, they had no doubt, the demand and consumption in the prairie states would always be immense.[21]

Sections of the last *Annual Report* on the Public Works before Confederation[22] so definitely express the continuation of Canadian hopes for the trade of the Middle West that they are worth repeating. After observing that, before the opening of the Erie Canal and improvements on the St. Lawrence, lack of transportation facilities meant there was no inducement to settle on the lakes above Ontario, the report went on to say that nearly all the states lying on the Atlantic coast had endeavoured to form communications with the West. It was impossible not to view with admiration the enterprise and ingenuity displayed in the great works

[18]As in the excerpts from the 1858 report of the British Consul at Buffalo quoted in the *Report of the Commissioners of Public Works*, 1859, 139-42.

[19]*Journals of Legislative Assembly*, 1864, vol. 23, appendix no. 2.

[20]*Ibid.*, appendix nos. 2, 4, 9.

[21]*Journals of Legislative Assembly*, 1863, appendix no. 5.

[22]For year ending June 30, 1867.

undertaken for the purpose of preventing the traffic of the West from following the St. Lawrence which was its natural course. It was evident, said the report, that those who designed the public works of Canada, besides desiring to provide for the immediate wants of the country, had also in view the prospects of the western trade, and had carried out their plans, fully confident that whatever might be the ingenuity displayed by their American neighbours in their artificial contrivances, the natural advantages of the St. Lawrence would in the end assert their superiority. These observations, it continued, "point to the conclusion that it is the destiny of the people who inhabit the Valley of the St. Lawrence, to become not only the chief carriers between the Eastern and Western States, but at no distant day the chief manufacturers of North America; and also that however tardy our people may have been in improving and perfecting the resources so lavishly bestowed upon their country by nature, there is every reason to believe that Canada will, under the impulse of her new political organization, soon attain the position to which she is entitled."

It was a nice valedictory for the Commissioners of Public Works under the government of the United Canadas but it was probably sounder in its backward than in its forward glance. Oh, they still talked about the great river of Canada and laid plans for its future but the ardour and the excitement of the forties and the early fifties were gone. One might almost say that Canada had become resigned to the secondary role of the St. Lawrence as a transportation route for the American West. Curiously, the termination of the American Reciprocity Treaty in 1866 did not make much difference to the shipping on the St. Lawrence system. The American vessels, which presumably lost the right with the termination of the treaty, continued to use its canals by the leave of the Canadian government, then later, when they regained the right, paradoxically used them less.

In 1870, the future of the St. Lawrence was entrusted to an investigating committee, which, no doubt, did its work with both intelligence and thoroughness, certainly with the latter. It met at Ottawa on November 25, 1870, and after drawing up the usual list of questions sent them to 2,400 government officials, business men, boards of trade, etc., in the United States and Canada. Within three months' time, which assuredly was swift enough, the tremendous mass of accumulated data had been reduced to a state of recommendation.[23]

With respect to the St. Lawrence Waterway, the Commission urged the enlargement of the locks and canals of both the Welland and St. Lawrence Canals so that there would be a minimum low-water level of twelve feet. A similar depth was recommended for the improvements on the Ottawa River. In 1875, Parliament in carrying out the proposals of the Commission departed from them slightly and authorized a minimum depth of fourteen feet throughout.

In the replies to the inquiry of the Commission in 1870 there had been considerable difference of opinion over the question of a minimum depth, but in general there was a belief that lake vessels were of a different type from those of the ocean, and there was no point to providing the channel depth required by the average salt-water boat. Twelve feet, most of the communicants thought, would be ample for lake shipping, and any greater

[23]*Canada, Sessional Papers,* no. 54, 1871, *Report of the Canal Commission.*

depth would be unnecessary and costly. In passing it might be mentioned that before twenty years had gone by the fourteen-foot depth was already insufficient for half the ships on the lakes.

One last comment on the report of the 1870 Commission. It is noteworthy that in the conclusion the emphasis is upon Canadian commerce and not so much upon the prospects of the St. Lawrence as the principal avenue for the commerce of the American West. It might speak of "securing to Canada a larger share of the growing trade of the West," but far more emphatic, and more symptomatic, of subsequent Canadian policy, was the opening sentence of the report's conclusion which read: "In urging this policy of Canal enlargement and extension . . . the Commissioners feel that it is the one which will best stimulate the commercial development of the whole Dominion, and bind all sections together in the bonds of mutual amity and interest."[24] Perhaps, it may be said with some degree of soundness, that, thereafter, while not indifferent to the American carrying trade, Canada was primarily concerned with holding her own.

[24] *Ibid.*