

REASONS

SUBMITTED IN FAVOUR OF ALLOWING

A TRANSIT OF MERCHANDISE

Through Canada to Michigan,

WITHOUT PAYMENT OF DUTIES :

WITH OBSERVATIONS AS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF

The River St. Lawrence

FOR EXTENDING

THE TRADE OF THE CANADAS

AND

British Commerce

GENERALLY.

BY JAMES BUCHANAN, ESQ.

HIS MAJESTY'S CONSUL AT NEW-YORK.

TORONTO: 1836

PRINTED AT THE PATRIOT-OFFICE,

CHEWETT'S BUILDINGS.

Extracts from Resolutions and various publications in relation to the rapidly rising Commerce of the West.

“Looking at the St. Lawrence,—that river was not made to accommodate the cities and villages on its border, but the river is the mother which has produced those cities and villages,—it has produced all the commerce which floats on its surface, the most powerful steam-boats that ever were employed.—Looking at the Western Lakes and at the fertile territory of which they are the centre, we may safely predict, that these lakes are to become the scenes of a mightier inland commerce than the world ever before witnessed.”—*Lower Canada paper.*

“That in view of the unparalleled increase in the population, and productions of the western states and territories, and particularly in view of the spirited and wisely directed efforts making in our sister states* and the Canadian provinces, to draw the trade of the western country from its accustomed route (the Erie Canal) to new channels leading to the sea-ports of other states, it is indispensably necessary to prevent a competition with the canals and railways of the Canadas, Pennsylvania and Maryland, which would prove highly injurious to the City of New York.”—*New York paper.*

“It is truly said, that from the stupendous increase in the resources of the Western States, other channels of a more ample and perfect kind will be needed.”—*Ohio Sentinel.*

“Owing to the rapid increase of the western states in wealth and power, other channels of commerce must be resorted to”.—*Indian Journal.*

* Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio.

“The truth is, we have not fully appreciated the future growth of the great interior of our country. On the west and north-west we have the valleys of the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, which are unrivalled in extent and fertility of soil, offering all the inducements of a healthful and temperate climate, free government, and among the most valued privileges, no dominant church, nor exclusive claim to office or favor, by reason of a particular creed.”—*New York paper.*

“The combined cost of enlarging the Erie Canal and a Ship Canal from Oswego to Albany, will not vary much from twenty millions of dollars.”—*Appeal to the Representative of New York.*

These are a few of the many extracts I might adduce in relation to the views universally held as to the importance of the commerce of the West. I have not set forth any extracts from the papers of Pennsylvania and Maryland, nor from those of Illinois and New Orleans, yet sufficient to rouse all who are interested in the prosperity of Canada and promotion of British interests to give immediate and serious consideration to the subject. The two mighty rivers which embrace and fertilize the territories to which I wish to draw attention, may be regarded as two great leading arteries sustaining and diffusing life and prosperity to and among all the lands adjoining the lakes, rivers, and streams tributary to the formation of those mighty absorbing arteries. But it is admitted that the St. Lawrence, from its more immediate connection with the great lakes, or, as they are called, inland seas, embraces a more extended and extending population, whose energies have no example in former times, and which has been mainly promoted by the spirit of enterprise which has been called forth by the genius of that truly great

man, De Witt Clinton, a name now inscribed on not only the public works, but on the hearts of every patriotic citizen of the State of New York, whose comprehensive mind looked forward to the mighty resources of the West, and with the improvement of his native State, infused life, vigour, and a spirit of improvement to the surrounding States.

The chief aim of all the public works of the State adverted to, has been, and is, to draw a portion of the commerce under review,—but where are they who but a few years ago had any conception of the rapid, I will add unparalleled growth of the western territory, including not only Michigan, the Wisconsin territory, and the valley of the upper Mississippi, but stretching to the north-west, where can calculation rest? as north of the 37th degree of latitude, and east of the Rocky Mountains, is a vast country capable of sustaining a population of fifty millions, and in less than 25 years will number ten millions. Where are the limits to such commerce, which, like a tide that no human power can control, is now extending over regions hitherto not regarded as sources of profit for ages to come, and which trade may be mainly drawn through Canada and the St. Lawrence, the outlet designed by the Creator, but which the folly of man has and may retard, if not pervert, like many other natural blessings?

I need not state to those who observe the energetic efforts of the citizens of the United States, that if New York, Pennsylvania, or any of the other states of the Union, possessed even a portion of the natural advantages the Canadas enjoy, those vast projects in which they are severally engaged at such an immense expense would never have been entered on, all their efforts would be directed to draw the Atlantic near to the vast territory referred to; because, however

we may value a home market, the sea-board for all great operations must be looked to. Speaking of drawing the Atlantic near to the Rocky Mountains may be deemed the language of fancy, but measures may be adopted by which those two points may be reached in as many hours as days were required heretofore. Surely such may be regarded as drawing them nearer. Two objects demand immediate attention so as to afford facilities for the transport of passengers and light merchandize by way of Hamilton to the River St. Clair; the other for the transport of heavier merchandize and passengers from Toronto to Lake Huron. These can be effected by rail-roads and the improvement of the natural channels of communication. I shall briefly shew the various routes in relation to the shores of Lakes Superior and Michigan: as to Lakes Erie, Huron, and Ontario, no question can well arise about them, yet their relative connection with the Atlantic shall be set forth and will be judged of fairly in the estimate of all who may investigate the subject with their vision unclouded by private interests.

Lake Ontario stands nearest the ocean in the most direct line from the "far west," whether proceeding to New York or Quebec. New York stands in the most direct line from Lake Erie, yet the Erie Canal is 369 miles to Albany, and upon an average is closed by frost nearly five months in the year, while the navigation from the north-east point of Lake Michigan and south part of Lake Superior by the River St. Clair, through Lake Erie, and by the proposed Ship Canal round the Falls of Niagara, would be equally closed the same period, and is above 1100 miles to the port of Oswego, from whence a Ship Canal is also proposed so as to reach New York by way of Albany. A Rail-road is now in progress from Lake Erie to New York; the distance

will be about 300 miles, the estimated expense is ten million dollars. The Ohio and Cleveland Canal, which aims at drawing the trade of the far West to Cincinnati and New Orleans, is by the map 300 miles, and from the frost is shut a considerable portion of the year; the Canal from Lake Erie to the Susquehanna, to reach Baltimore, and to the Delaware to reach Philadelphia, are all truly important to those States, but not calculated to embrace the trade under consideration, all of which are subject to be closed by the winter frosts also a considerable portion of the year. A canal from Chicago is also in operation, which has in view to bear their products to New Orleans as an outlet: this canal will also be closed by frost. (I regret I have not been able to obtain the distance with greater accuracy, having taken them from the map.) Thus I have brought forward the channels opened and in progress in the adjoining States to draw to the ocean that commerce which naturally should be borne by the waters of the St. Lawrence.

The next consideration is, what are the facilities afforded by the St. Lawrence, and how are those facilities to be rendered available to promote the interest of the Canadas. Before I proceed, I shall again draw attention to the view held by our interprising neighbours. In a memorial presented to the Legislature of New York, in the Session of 1835, in reference to the Trade under consideration, the petitioners set forth: "We will not undertake to point out the great improvements in the States of Pennsylvania and Maryland, and those contemplated in Virginia, these are well known, but to the magnificent project of the British Canadian Provinces, in part executed, for the construction of a Ship Navigation from Lake Ontario to the ocean, and to the probable effects of those improvements upon the future commercial prosperity of the State." And

again: "The extraordinary efforts now making in the Canadas for the improvement of the great *natural navigable facilities* existing within those Provinces, furnish abundant evidence of the ability to reap the great harvest of the Western trade, unless promptly counteracted by corresponding energy on the part of our State."

The same memorialists observe there are three general outlets: one by New Orleans, one by New York by way of Canada and the Hudson, and such Rail-roads as may be auxiliary thereto, and the third by Montreal and Quebec.

As to the first, the insalubrity of the climate is an insuperable objection to a regular trade: it is one of those natural impediments there is no way of countervailing. Pennsylvania is doing much, but the elevated region she is compelled to intersect is a great obstacle to her efforts. Thus between Montreal and New York, more equal competition will ensue, for the trade of the upper country. The cheapness of transportation from Lake Ontario to Montreal *is a decided advantage, and one not easily if at all to be counteracted.* We may set down as certain to Montreal, the trade of the country adjacent to Lake Erie; and to this may be added one half the trade of Ohio, Illinois and Michigan." The same petitioners set forth—"We will not enlarge upon the extraordinary growth of Upper Canada during the last five years, or upon its great natural advantages of soil and climate, (equalling the most fertile of the western countries,) nor upon its great natural resources: these considerations lead to the contemplation how the expanding trade of the West may be drawn to New York, and not pass through the Canadas by those facilities which *nature has furnished*, and which must follow the improvement of the navigation of the St. Lawrence, whereby the west-

ern trade may be lost to us beyond the possibility of recovery.”

I have thus added the opinions expressed by editors of public journals in different States, and the views of such widely extended interests in the United States, as the best testimony in favor of the importance of the measures I have long advocated. As a proof that such opinions are not vaguely put forth, all those States named have, and are expending millions to draw a portion of that trade which naturally belongs to the Canadas; and it is ardently to be hoped the people of both provinces, laying aside all political differences, will without delay unite in calling on their respective Legislatures to press forward the improvement of the St. Lawrence now in progress by the liberality of the Parliament of the Upper Province, so that a free outlet to the Atlantic may be afforded from Ontario to Quebec: and let it be kept in view, that when channels are once opened, and trade drawn by them, it becomes truly difficult to turn it into a new channel, so that if Canada is to be enriched, the works referred to must be put into such a train as to be *completed* by the year 1840 at farthest. As some may be unacquainted with the magnitude of the works now in progress by the people of the Upper Province, I give below a letter* with which I have been favored by Capt.

* CORNWALL, 28th July, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 4th arrived here on the 14th, when I was preparing to go to Sorel to pay a visit to Sir John and Lady Colborne. I now embrace the first leisure time I have had since my return hither to reply to it.

The Canal now in progress between this place and the head of the Long Saut Rapid has been undertaken with a view of forming an uninterrupted communication with the ocean from Lake Ontario and the upper lakes. This Canal is one hundred feet wide at the bottom, and at the surface of the water, which will be ten feet deep, it will be one hundred and fifty feet wide. The Locks, which are of cut stone, are fifty-five feet broad; they will have nine feet of water on the mitre sill, and they will admit vessels of one hundred and seventy-five feet in length. The length of this

Phillipotts, under whose able superintendence the work is now being completed, it will be apparent that this Canal is upon a truly magnificent scale, opening out a channel for those

Canal is eleven miles and a half, in which distance there are six Locks, descending in all forty-eight feet.

The original estimate for this work was £195,000, with the addition of ten per cent. for contingencies and the expense of superintendence, exclusive of the cost of damage to property, &c.

In consequence of the very great demand for workmen of all kinds in the United States, the price of labour has advanced very materially since the contracts were entered into, and the number of men employed has consequently been very much diminished: this circumstance operated very injuriously on the Contractors, until the Commissioners saw the necessity of interfering; and, in order to prevent their being obliged to give up the work altogether, and to abandon their Contracts, it was deemed expedient, for the public interest to add ten per cent. to the contract prices on all work performed last year, and thirty per cent. on that to be performed during the present year; these advances being considered in proportion to the rise in the price of labour and materials since the Contracts were entered into.

The work was commenced in July 1834, under the direction of a Resident or Superintending Engineer, who has been assisted, when necessary, by the advice of a consulting Engineer, who occasionally visits the work. The expenditure of the money required for this work, as well as the general control of every thing connected with it, has been entrusted to a Board of seven Commissioners, who have been appointed by an act of the Provincial Legislature. The amount granted for the improvement of this navigation generally is £350,000, of which sum £166,060 have been expended to this date, including £12,700, which have been paid for damage to property.

The line of this Canal is divided into twenty-seven sections, of various lengths, according to circumstances, which have been let out to Contractors separately, as well as the Locks, Lock-gates, Culverts, &c. A part of Section No. 1, which is the longest, and opposite the Long Saut, has since been subdivided into six subsections, and re-let to other Contractors, in order to hasten the completion of the work.

During the latter part of last year, the difficulty of procuring labourers, and the high price of provisions, combined to retard the progress of the work: an increased emigration has this year afforded the Contractors the means of prosecuting it with more spirit; and it is hoped that, if a sufficient number of workmen can be obtained, this Canal will be completed during the summer of 1838.

A clause in the act of the Provincial Legislature, which provides for the improvement of the navigation of the St. Lawrence in this Province, requires that the works now in progress between this place and the Long Saut shall be completed before the other improvements contemplated between the Long Saut and Prescott shall be commenced.

The first of these is Farren's Point, where it is proposed to construct a Canal about 4000 feet in length, with a Lock of four

advantages to be derived from the trade of the west. A great outcry is, and has been raised (I regret to say justly) against the Parliament of Lower Canada, that they have not been moved by the patriotic example of the Upper Province, to follow up the improvement. I believe all that has yet been done by the Lower Province, was a grant of 500*l.* to make surveys, but what has been the result I have not heard, and I deeply regret that the commercial community has devoted very little attention to the subject, compared with their zeal as to other matters of much less importance. I am aware each party

feet lift. Secondly, Rapide Plat, where a Canal of about three miles and nine-tenths will be required, with a Lockage of eleven and a half feet. Thirdly, Point Cardinal, where a Canal of about fifteen hundred feet will be required, with a Lock of two and a half feet lift. And lastly, Les Gallopes, where a Canal of two thousand four hundred feet will be required, with a Lock of four and a half feet lift. When these works are finished, and they will require about two years, the navigation of the St. Lawrence in this Province will be complete, safe, and commodious for all vessels which can pass through the Locks above described, and the communication from Coteau du Lac to Lake Ontario will be uninterrupted.

The parts of the St. Lawrence in Lower Canada which require improvement are between Coteau du Lac and the Cascades; a survey of which has been taken, I believe, by order of the House of Assembly of that Province; also the enlargement of the Canal between Lachine and Montreal, and probably some improvements in Lake St. Francis, for the survey of which £500 was granted by the Legislature during their last Session. Commissioners have been appointed for the purpose of deciding on the best mode of carrying on this work; and it is hoped that during the next Session of the Legislature of that Province a sufficient sum will be voted to complete it without further delay.

I am not aware that any private funds have been contributed towards this Canal in any way, nor can I inform what is the probable amount of the expense of the Canals required in the Lower Province to make this communication complete. I am of opinion, however, that, with a proper force, the whole may be finished in three years, if a sufficient sum of money be granted at the next meeting of the Assembly of Lower Canada, who have already appointed Commissioners to make inquiry respecting the practicability of carrying it into effect; but it has not yet, I believe, been satisfactorily ascertained that Lake St. Lewis, between Lachine and the Cascades, can be navigated by vessels drawing nine feet of water.

I remain, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

GEORGE PHILLPOTTS.

casts the blame upon the other; but I am yet ignorant, if all that could be done has been attempted; indeed, I am not aware of any Act which could entail such deserved censure and justify very strong measures against the Canadian party now in power, than their refusing aid in opening a communication to correspond with what is now being carried into effect in the Upper Province. The obstructions imposed on the intercourse between Upper Canada and the sea by Lower Canada, if separate states, would lead to War, and the imposition of a tax upon British subjects coming to the Upper Province by way of Quebec, is an act which has been sanctioned by His Majesty, upon grounds truly incomprehensible. But I proceed to consider the following measures as essential for rendering the St. Lawrence tributary to all the advantages adverted to, in respect to the vast and increasing trade of the West.

The first is the carrying the Ship Navigation from the Coteau du Lac to Montreal, and that too so as to be ready to receive the vessels which are to pass through that part of the River St. Lawrence, from the Canal from the Galoppes to Cornwall, [described in a note p.10.] The second the making of a Rail-road from Toronto to that part of Lake Huron adapted to, and most convenient for the trade of Michigan; third the making a Railway from Hamilton to the River St. Clair, which would be most suitable for the people not only of Michigan but of the Wisconsin territory; and fourth, the passing of an Act of the Imperial Parliament allowing Merchandize to pass free of duties through the Province of Canada, under such limitations as is usual where transit is allowed, or by making Toronto and other places free ports, so that Merchandize could be Warehoused and exported out of the Province free of duties.

Having in my address to His Excellency Sir Francis Head, gone so fully into the subject of rail-ways, and pointed out the facilities of raising the funds for their formation, I would alone advert to the subject at present as connected with free transit. It is to be observed that a line of rail-road from Toronto to Lake Huron would not, as I am informed, exceed 76 miles, and could be passed in 6 hours; while the distance by the River St. Clair, Lake Erie, and to Lake Ontario, is fully equal to 700 miles, and would by steam-boats, &c. occupy 3 days, with a like number of transhipments or removals, and by the ordinary ship conveyance would occupy as many days as hours by the rail-road to Toronto. From Toronto by steam to Oswego 12 hours, what route can compare with the one under consideration? Who does not perceive, that the vast supplies of Hardware, Crockery, Cutlery, and British Manufacture, would pass direct from England to the Western Merchants by the St. Lawrence, while all the supplies they draw from New York would by way of Oswego, pass on to Lake Huron by Toronto or Hamilton.

And would you allow the Citizens of the United States and others to pass their Merchandise the same as his Majesty's Subjects, across the Peninsula from Toronto to Lake Huron free of duties? Certainly! and that too without reference to any act of reciprocity on their part, deeming it sound policy to pursue that course which is beneficial for the Province, and not preclude it from great advantages because others may not be disposed to pursue a corresponding policy towards us, the policy of drawing commerce by our rivers, rail-ways, and by our vessels and boats, is solely with a view to render the facilities which the Province affords profitable to its Inhabitants, and that too without reference to the policy of others—I should hope the day is come, that those

measures which will draw out the vast resources of the Country may be adopted without talking of reciprocity, so that the unrivalled, and but little known great advantages of the Canadas may be called forth. I presume earnestly to recommend the measures of a free transit as one of Commercial policy, as well as of political expediency and sound wisdom. If by this channel the products of England can reach the far West, by a shorter route, unclogged with duties, will not a fair portion, if not the chief of the carrying trade, and particularly all the heavy and bulky articles, be carried by our ships to Quebec, Montreal, and on to Lake Huron, and shall not we draw upon an average four pounds a ton, and derive from each individual passing from Quebec a like sum, independent of the freight from England; and if only by the rail way, would not each passenger leave a pound at least, in the Province. Surely, to turn away such advantages----to shut out such a certain source of incalculable gain to the Province; upon the plea of Reciprocity, would manifest an intellectual lethargy, a degree of indifference truly to be deplored and not to be expected from a people goaded to exertion by a surrounding energy and prosperous enterprize unexampled. I am grieved to find that such is the baneful influence of political strife, that one party cannot bear to see a measure conferring prosperity on the Province, emanate from, or that such should be strenuously supported by the other—yet, each party professes to be governed by liberal principles, and these in accordance with a regard for the rights of, and tenderness for the opinions of others.—O that I could but persuade my fellow-subjects, who talk about their anxiety for the prosperity of the Province, to unite in support of those measures which they, and all others admit, must produce certain prosperity.

I call upon all who are jealous of their loyalty, of their love for the British Constitution—for British connection, and I call upon all who wish to cherish a kindly intercourse with our neighbors, to lay aside every feeling but that of rendering Canada the great high-way from the shores of the Mississippi, and the Rocky Mountains, to not only to the Atlantic by Quebec, but to New York, the commerce of which City, is mainly attributed to those internal channels of communication which have been made at a great expence. I deliberately state that such prosperity has been the fruit of their enterprise and energy, and hence Capital has flown in from other Countries entrusted to their management, I may venture to say that one third of the capital which has set afloat the great enterprize in the States of the Union, including also the Bank of the United States, has been furnished by British Capital, and were similar energy exhibited in Canada, and the baneful consequences arising from limiting the rate of interest done away, surely Canada would be preferred, as a more stable security, as happily exempt from the certain ruinous consequences of universal suffrage, and voting by ballot.

Before I conclude I would earnestly press the following consideration on the attention of the proprietors of property in Montreal and Quebec, who, it is believed, do not appreciate the advantage within their reach. There are but three main outlets to the ocean for the Western trade: one is chiefly by artificial means, viz. New York; the other two by natural channels, viz. New Orleans and Quebec; the power of steam can be rendered all important to the two latter, and only partially so to New York,—see to what an unexampled value the houses, building lots, and lands, in and near New York and New Orleans, have attained—and to what may such rise be justly attributed? has not such risen

with the increased facilities afforded to commerce, in drawing it to those Ports? And will not the same results assuredly arise to Montreal? I feel a deep conviction that the proprietors of the property at Montreal and Quebec would be not only great, but immediate gainers, did they even at their own cost, complete that line of navigation, now being executed by the Upper Province, to the Coteau du Lac, from whence I have understood but about 12 or 14 miles of canaling would be necessary from the Coteau to Lake Louis; and I have been informed the adaptation of the grounds through the Seignory of Beauharnois is truly favorable for a Canal. I submit these observations to the Seignors of Montreal and Quebec, with the further observation that the promotion of the internal improvement mentioned, should stand separate from those political questions, which are deemed, as embarrassing principles. I disclaim all interference in one way or another with the distractions which unhappily prevail, having alone in view the pressing forward the true interest and prosperity of the Province, by opening a way for an extended commerce which bids fair to enrich the Canadas beyond the most sanguine anticipations.

NOTE.—All who look upon the map will perceive chains of Lakes, available as channels of communication; to promote such as may be approved, the aid of the Land Bank will be available beyond all other sources. Among the most prominent of these are—from the head of the Bay of Quinte by the Trent to Georgian Bay; next, connecting the Ottawa and Lake Huron. I omitted in my letter to the Lieut. Governor, to observe that a Railway from Hamilton to Queenston, by the Head of the Lake, so as to meet the line to New York, will be all essential to carry the traveller during the season that the navigation closes. The overcoming the obstruction of the St. Ann Rapids on the Ottawa, is truly creditable to the enterprising person who has effected it, as thereby defeating a monopoly of the canaling trade by the Rideau Canal, and were the obstructions to Steamboats, arising from the lowness of the bridges over the canal, from Point Fortune to Granville removed, the importance of that great work would be justly estimated, it is respectfully urged upon those who have the power to investigate the state of those bridges, particularly the stone bridge in Granville.

