OCEAN PORTS FOR WISCONSIN

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The prospect of ocean ships coming from foreign lands and entering directly into the several Wisconsin harbors excites the imagination, and arouses to a high pitch the interest in the proposed deep waterway now under consideration by the two countries, the United States and Canada. The project will bring the midwest country a thousand miles nearer the high seas and its products of factory and farm an equal distance nearer the markets of the world. Thus, the state of Wisconsin is vitally concerned in the proposed St. Lawrence deep waterway. We now know with absolute certainty that we are no longer dealing with a beautiful dream, but with a project that is moving fast toward a splendid reality.

The shore lines of the state of Wisconsin are blessed with fifteen efficient lake harbors which are contributing a large share toward the marvelous commerce now being carried on the inland seas known as the Great Lakes. With the completion of the seaway connecting these inland waters with the Atlantic Ocean, the several Wisconsin lake ports may readily be transformed into ocean ports.

It will, therefore, be of interest to every Wisconsin citizen to learn just how far the deep waterway has progressed, what its actual status is at this time, and the final steps now under way to insure its realization. Furthermore, it may be quite in order to state here in just what manner Wisconsin is identified with this momentous project, and how the state is eventually to be benefited through its realization.

Foreign Ports and Wisconsin Ports

Before discussing the progress made toward realizing the proposed deep waterway connecting the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean it may be well to describe in a somewhat elementary way, for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the project, just what is here proposed. First of all, it should be remembered that for the past eighty years ships have come, off and on, from Hamburg, Liverpool, Queenstown, Rotterdam, and some of the Scandinavian ports directly to Wisconsin, to the ports of Milwaukee, Green Bay, Kenosha,
THE NEW WELLAND CANAL

The first link in the great seaway. This lock is 820 ft. long, 80 ft. wide, and 30 ft. deep—comparable to the Panama Canal locks.

The SS Georgian was the first ship to enter Lock No. 1, Lake Ontario entrance, April 21, 1930. (Courtesy Dept. Railways and Canals, Ottawa.)
Manitowoc, etc. Those coming directly to our ports in recent years have carried clay products, wood pulp, chemicals, and the like. During the recent world war, and for a few years thereafter, ships carried cargoes of grain, packed meats, and other food commodities directly from the ports of Milwaukee and Chicago to Hamburg, Queenstown, and Liverpool. Other ships carried gasoline, automobiles, and fuel from Lake Erie ports directly to ports of Europe.

Some one at this point may well ask the question: If it has been possible in the past for ships to travel between the ports of Lake Michigan and Erie and the ports of Europe, unhampered and with reasonable expedition, why all this agitation for a deep waterway to the sea? The answer is this: During the world war and for some years after, ocean freight rates were so high that even crafts of the smaller type with a cargo capacity of from 500 to 1,000 tons could afford to engage in an ocean traffic. During normal times the cargo unit must be larger. Germany, since the close of the war, has built a large number of merchant ships, the cargo unit of which was somewhere near the 12,000-ton mark.

Again, the smaller ships may now enter the St. Lawrence River, come up into Lake Ontario, pass through the Welland Canal, and thus enter Lakes Erie, Huron, Superior, and Michigan, while the larger ocean freighters can come only as far as Montreal, Canada. Any cargoes which they may have for the lake ports must be transhipped into smaller crafts. And then the journey can be made profitable only if the cargo happens to consist of a precious or valuable commodity.

The project, then, to connect the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean means the improvement of the St. Lawrence River and the Welland Canal so as to permit the larger type of ocean freighters to pass without interruption and with reasonable expedition from the high seas to the inland seas.

Present Status of the Project

It will be equally interesting to note the change which has attended the project from the time of its inception to the present plans upon which the seaway is to be built. The newer developments provide for an entirely different arrangement from that first proposed. At the beginning of the negotiations between the United States and Canada, it was believed that an agreement should be reached as to the physical feasibility of the seaway and an estimate made as to the cost involved, to be borne equally by the two countries.

A commission of engineers appointed by Canada and the United States submitted studies on the physical problems involved and estimated the probable cost. An international joint commission established the commercial utility of the seaway and noted the benefits to be derived by the two countries, not only in navigation but in the power potentiality of the St. Lawrence stream.

When those concerned with the preliminaries came nearer their
task they realized that the original ideas could not be carried out but that concrete situations would become the determining factors. Thus when it was realized that the St. Lawrence is only in part a border water, and for the greater distance runs entirely through Canadian territory, it also became evident that a revision of the equities involved would necessarily and logically follow. The natural rights which the Canadians enjoyed in the waters running through their own territory, had to be respected. During the more recent diplomatic conversations carried on between the two countries, there gradually shaped into a common understanding the plan that Canada would develop that part of the St. Lawrence River within the dominion territory and leave to the United States the development of the international section in the region of the Thousand Islands.

At this point it should be stated that the people of the east are concerned in hydro-electric power, while the people of the mid-west are concerned in navigation. Thus, while the western provinces of Canada want an outlet to the sea, the eastern provinces are highly interested in the hydro-power potentialities of the St. Lawrence, which aggregate some five million horse power. This situation for a time assumed a threatening aspect. Would the power interests of the east respect the navigation interests of the west? Private capital in abundance stood ready to go into the huge power plants to be constructed. Would the locks and canals constructed for power purposes make navigation through them feasible and practical?

At this juncture the Dominion government stepped in and ordered that the navigation side of things be protected. It also developed that it was to the interest of the power companies to encourage rather than hinder navigation. Many of the industries located and to be located on the St. Lawrence River are dependent upon water transportation. At the same time, these industries will be the principal consumers of hydro-electric power. The canals constructed in connection with hydro-electric plants will control the currents to about one and three quarter miles per hour, rendering navigation reasonably safe and expeditious. So the danger which confronted the navigation interests has been removed. While the power projects are developed by private enterprise they will be subject to government regulation—a double assurance that the navigation side of things will be protected.

What the United States Must Do

While private enterprise will develop the power plants under government supervision in such a manner as to protect the navigation interests, the projects lying wholly within Canadian territory will require no treaty agreement. The improvement of the international section left to the United States is, however, subject to a treaty understanding between the two countries. The question of coming together in the matter has been the subject of conversations between
The project eventually divides most into five sections: Thousand Islands, International Section, St. Lawrence Seaway, and Lakes. The first two sections are international waters and can be traversed only through international agreements of the two nations.

The Thousand Islands Section is a deep waterway with the exception of a few rock shoals which are now being eliminated. The Thousand Islands Bridge, to the upper Left, the Thousand Islands Bridge to Canada, and beyond.

The International Section places the section on the St. Lawrence Seaway Project. The Million-Hp. Locks at the mouth of the river, where the river equals the international boundary, are now being built.

The St. Lawrence Seaway is an extensive waterway system to be called the St. Lawrence River or the St. Lawrence River, the St. Lawrence River, and the St. Lawrence River, as designated by the river, the St. Lawrence River, or the St. Lawrence River, as designated by the river.

In the St. Lawrence Seaway, the water is deep water and no material improvement is necessary.

In the St. Lawrence Seaway, the project is being carried out by the government of Canada, with the cooperation of the St. Lawrence River Bridges Corporation. In the river, the water is deep water and no material improvement is necessary.
Ottawa and Washington for the past year. The delay has been due to differences which arose in Canada as to the relative rights of the Dominion government and the provinces concerned. Mackenzie King, the former premier, finally openly espoused the St. Lawrence project. His successor, Premier Bennett, has done likewise.

The Canadian government has demonstrated its faith in the utility of the Great Lakes by building the new Welland Canal which will be completed early in the year 1931, at a cost of $120,000,000. The seven new locks are comparable to the Panama Canal locks. They will be 30 feet deep, 80 feet wide, and 840 feet long, permitting passage of the largest ocean freighters.

In the United States there is a common agreement on the subject. The late Presidents Wilson and Harding were enthusiastically committed to the project. Former President Coolidge and the present chief executive favor the project with considerable earnestness. The opposition of New York is no longer considered a menace to the realization of the St. Lawrence as a deep seaway.

The international section to be built by the United States will cover a distance of sixty miles in the region of the Thousand Islands and will involve a cost of approximately $100,000,000. The combined power and navigation channels will be built so as to regulate the speed of the currents and permit the passing of vessels up and down the St. Lawrence with reasonable expedition.

In summarizing the situation affecting the great international waterway project it should be said that the physical problems, engineering and financial, have been clarified. The commercial utility of the great project is readily understood on both sides of the border line. The last lap in the realization of the seaway is the diplomatic negotiations which will find expression in a treaty document between the United States and Canada.

Wisconsin's Participation in the Project

Coming back to the question of the lake harbors of Wisconsin, it may be said that most of them may be improved to a depth sufficient to accommodate the ocean freighters likely to enter. The following Wisconsin lake cities are equipped with harbor entrances which are capable of the suggested improvement: Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Port Washington, Sheboygan, Green Bay, De Pere, Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Ashland, Superior, Kewaunee, Oconto, Marinette, Bayfield.

It was under the Phillips' administration that the legislature, on the initiative of Senators Wilkinson and Nye, familiarized itself with the prospect of an outlet to the sea by way of the St. Lawrence River. The writer was called into legislative conference, outlined the project in its physical and economic aspects, and explained the benefits which the state was likely to derive through its realization. Participation in the movement to that end meant a jointure with other states in the propaganda labors and the dissemination of in-
formation on the subject which was deemed necessary. The result was that the legislature created a commission of three members and made a biennial appropriation of $6,500, which has been renewed every two years since then. The commission consists of Judge Charles A. Lamoreux, chairman, Ashland; William George Bruce, Milwaukee; and Charles A. Halbert, Madison.

Thus the state of Wisconsin has cooperated with twenty-two other states in bringing before the American people such facts and data that would enlighten them on the advantages involved in the St. Lawrence project. It required no particular effort to secure an af-

![Image: GETTING READY FOR OCEAN COMMERCE]

Milwaukee develops its harbor for both lake and ocean traffic. This view shows the first unit, an open dock terminal.

firmative sentiment in Wisconsin. The message, however, had to be carried westward and southward in order to secure sufficient support to make possible the necessary legislation at Washington.

In view of the fact that Wisconsin has lent financial support toward the realization of the project it may be well to ask, in what manner will the state be benefited by a direct deep-water route to the sea? The answer must be that the Wisconsin Deep Waterway Commission marshalled a mass of testimony at the hearings conducted at Milwaukee, Superior, and Ashland by the International Joint Commission, which testimony, reduced to simple terms, teaches that the exports of Wisconsin’s farm and factory products will be materially increased through an expeditious and economical means of reaching the sea. These exports now exceed the fifty million mark, but realizing that in a competitive world market transportation is a vital and frequently a controlling factor, it becomes evident that the outlet for Wisconsin’s products can be greatly increased.
The direct shipment of these products from the Wisconsin ports to the ports of Europe and elsewhere will obviate the higher rail transportation costs and the trans-shipment charges of eastern ports, which are the most expensive in the world, and enable us to stand in a more competitive attitude before the producers of other lands. The saving on grain alone coming from the midwest is estimated at over $200,000,000 annually. Wisconsin’s share in that saving is considerable.

But Wisconsin is a manufacturing as well as an agricultural state. Its factory output covers a great diversity of articles which are exportable and many of which now find their way to the four ends of the world. They encounter competition, it is true, but the greater handicap must be found in the fact that as an inland country we lack an economical and ready access by way of the high seas to the great centers of consumption.

There is every reason to believe that during normal times, with a direct deep-water route to the sea, the foreign market for Wisconsin’s farm and factory output may well be doubled. The investment made by the state in securing the deep-water route is nominal compared with the benefits that await the agricultural and industrial interests upon the completion of the project.
Tenney Park, Madison, January, 1931.