

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

EXTRACT from a speech made by the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada, at a banquet given in his honor at the Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, on the 28th October, 1896.

“Of all the western products that go by the lakes, all western wheat that comes from Minnesota and Dakota and other States, all products from the west that pass through the Sault Ste. Marie Canal and that are now going to Europe, 96 per cent. are forwarded via Tonawanda, Buffalo or Oswego, to the seaboard at Boston or New York, and only 4 per cent. comes to Montreal, and not 1 per cent. reaches Quebec. Change this state of things, and make the St. Lawrence route a free one, then the figures will be reversed, and 96 per cent of the western trade will come not only to Montreal, but also to Quebec. Montreal will be unable to take care of the western trade, at that time; the Montreal harbour will be insufficient, and the traffic from the west will overflow in the direction of Sorel, Three Rivers and Quebec. This is, gentlemen, the future of Quebec. It will take some years before the canals of the St. Lawrence are sufficiently deepened so as to allow the western trade to come to Quebec, but there is in the meantime another thing that we can do. If the water route is not yet open for us, it is possible to shorten the distance over land. Look at the map once more and you will see at a glance the great benefit in store for us, to be afforded by the Parry Sound route to Quebec. Consult the map and you will find that the route from Parry Sound to Quebec is almost a straight line. It is an air line. It is the line that would be followed by a carrier pigeon if started at Parry Sound to come back to the pigeon house at Quebec. This route is about to be opened through the energetic efforts of two men. In the first place, Mr. Booth, of Ottawa, will have completed, before the month of December, 1897, the line from Parry Sound Harbor as far as the Ottawa River, at Hawkesbury, and the efforts of one of your own fellow-citizens, the Honorable P. Garneau, will have completed the other link, which will connect Mr. Booth's line at Hawkesbury, with the port of Quebec. What will then be the result of this? The result will be: that the wheat cargoes taking the lakes at Duluth and Fort William, and which have now to be unloaded at Tonawanda, Buffalo or Oswego, to be thence carried to the seaboard at Boston or New York, these same wheat cargoes, instead of having to go to United States ports, will come to Parry Sound, and from that point, by means of this railway, will necessarily have to come by Quebec to be transhipped into sea-going vessels for European ports. This is not a dream. We have here an elevator on the Princess Louise dock. Well, then, what benefit have we derived from this elevator, which was built at a large cost, and in which we put a great deal of faith? It was expected that this elevator would bring us the Western grain trade; well, I would be much surprised if even a single bushel of wheat has as yet been put into this elevator at Quebec. But when we will give the Western wheat an outlet to the sea 800 miles shorter, between Duluth and Liverpool, than the existing route via New York, we may hope for what will then take place, that by that time we will have at Quebec the wheat trade, the export wheat trade, and that Quebec will become the great transshipping point of the trade between the East and the West. This is, gentlemen, what we may expect for the city of Quebec.”