

and improvements of the canal system followed, and the progress in this respect has been continuous to the present day. The total expenditure on canals in Canada down to Confederation is officially estimated at \$20,962,244.

The first steam railway in Canada was opened in 1837, between Laprairie, at the foot of the Lachine rapids on the south shore of the St. Lawrence, and St. Johns, on the Richelieu river, supplying a link in the railway and water communication between Montreal and New York. In 1847 a line was opened between Montreal and Lachine. The 'fifties were, however, pre-eminently the period of railway expansion in pre-Confederation times. In 1853 and 1854 the Great Western railway was opened from Niagara Falls to Hamilton, London and Windsor. In 1853 communication was completed between Montreal and Island Pond, establishing connection with a line from that place to Portland, and in 1854 the line was opened between Quebec and Richmond, thus giving railway communication between Quebec and Montreal. In December, 1855, communication was established between Hamilton and Toronto, and in 1856, by the Grand Trunk railway, between Montreal and Toronto. The Northern railway from Toronto to Collingwood was completed in 1855 and the Buffalo and Lake Huron railway between Fort Erie and Goderich in 1858, though sections of it had been completed and operated earlier.

River and lake navigation developed steadily from the year 1809, when the "Accommodation," a steamer owned by John Molson of Montreal, began to ply between Montreal and Quebec. The year 1816 saw the "Frontenac" launched in lake Ontario. Year by year larger and faster vessels were placed on our inland waters, the chief promoters of steamboat enterprises being in Upper Canada, the Hon. John Hamilton of Kingston and in Lower Canada, the Hon. John Molson. A large and powerful steamboat interest had been created by the middle 'fifties when the competition of the Grand Trunk railway gave a serious blow to lake and river transportation.

It was in the 'fifties also that steam navigation was established between Canada and Great Britain. Mr. (afterwards Sir) Hugh Allan, of Montreal was the pioneer in this important enterprise. As early as 1853 some vessels of about 1,200 tons capacity were placed upon the route between Montreal and Liverpool, and in 1855 a mail contract was assigned to the Allan firm for a fortnightly service. The early history of this enterprise was marked by an unparalleled and most discouraging series of disasters; but with unflagging courage the owners of the Allan line held to their task, repaired their losses as best they could, and gradually succeeded in giving the service a high character for regularity and safety.

The Genesis of Confederation.¹—The idea of a federation of the British provinces in North America had been mooted at various times. It had been hinted at in the discussion in the House of Commons on the Constitutional or Canada Act in 1791. William Lyon Mackenzie suggested it in 1825, and Lord Durham had given it his consideration, but was led to believe it impracticable in his time. The idea was taken up and strongly advocated by the British American League, a short-lived political organization of a conservative character formed at Montreal in 1849, with branches in other cities. In 1851 the question was brought before the legislature, but a motion for an address to the Queen on the subject only secured seven votes. In 1858, however, a strong speech in its favour was made by Mr. (afterwards Sir) A. T. Galt. Macdonald's government was defeated in 1858 but was reconstructed under Cartier with union of the

¹For a more detailed account of the Confederation negotiations, see Sir Joseph Pope's article, "The Story of Confederation," in the 1918 Year Book, pp. 1-13.