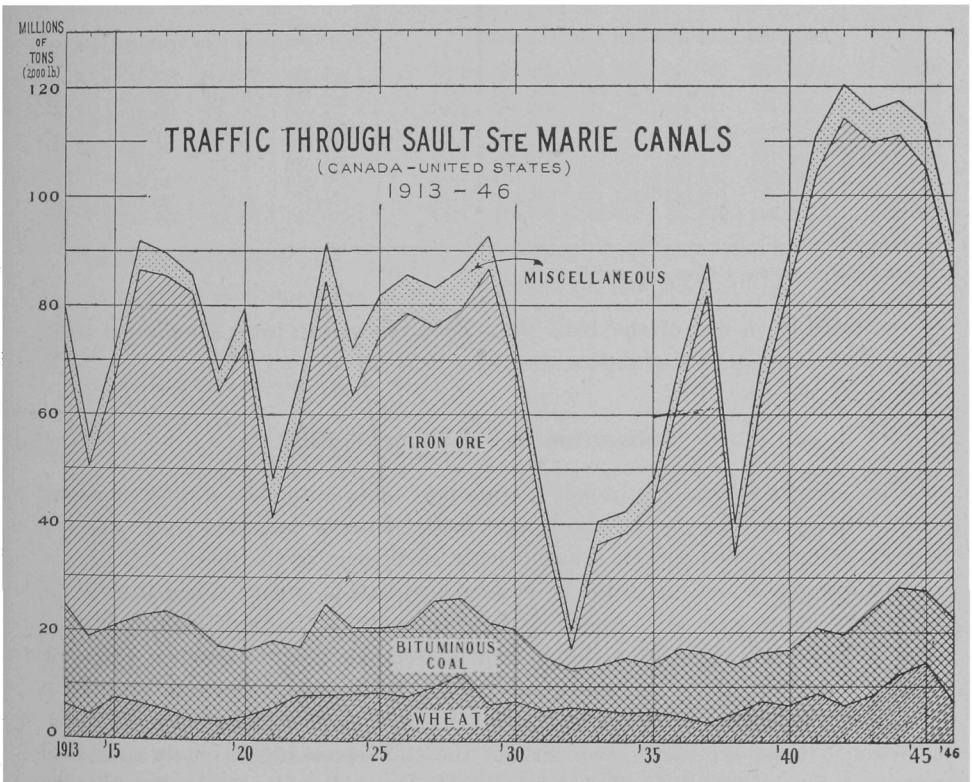


than the Panama traffic, to a high of 120,200,814 tons in 1942. The dominant traffic, from a tonnage aspect, is iron ore. During the past 50 years this has fluctuated from 4,901,000 tons in 1892, an average of 50,000,000 tons in the 1920's, a low of 3,607,000 tons in 1932 and to a peak of 94,326,578 tons in 1942. Although wheat has ranged as low as only 7 p.c. of the iron-ore tonnage, its value has generally been greater than that of the iron-ore traffic, and has been the most valuable single commodity passed through the canals; in 1928 the value of wheat passed through the canals was 40 p.c. of the value of all traffic. Other grains have been about one-quarter to one-fifth of the wheat tonnage and a smaller ratio of the value.

Bituminous coal has generally been second in tonnage to iron ore and a large part of it is carried by the ore vessels when returning for a cargo of ore.

The tonnage of the three principal commodities and the tonnage of all freight passed through the canals for the years 1913 to 1946, inclusive, are shown by the following chart.



The Panama Canal.—The Panama Canal, which was opened to commercial traffic on Aug. 15, 1914, has been a waterway of great importance to British Columbian ports, from which vessels leave direct for British and European ports throughout the year. As an alternative route to that of the transcontinental railway lines, such a passage by water is of vital importance in the solution of the larger transportation problems of the continent, and while its influence is perhaps more potential than actual, such a check on transcontinental rail rates is a valuable one. During the First World War the great expectations based upon the opening of