

1902-9-4 Journal of Commerce

...Mediterranean, a distance of 150 miles, is 60 feet, wide, 6½ feet deep, has 114 locks, and is, at its highest point, 600 feet above the level of the sea. Its cost was about £700,000.

It is pointed out that in Europe and Canada the canals are operated in conjunction with, and are made complementary to, the railway systems of those countries. The total length of Canada's canals in operation is 262 miles, but the aggregate length of continuous inland navigation rendered available by them is nearly 3,000 miles. In India the canals, constructed primarily for irrigation purposes at a cost of about £3,000,000, are used extensively for inland navigation. In Germany the canals, apart from the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal, are 1,511 miles in length, and the canalised rivers are 1,452 miles. In France the length of canals in operation is 3,021 miles. In the United Kingdom the length of canals belonging to railways is 1,139 miles, and that of canals not belonging to railways 2,703 miles. The total paid-up capital of United Kingdom canals (exclusive of the Manchester Ship Canal) is something like £30,000,000.

The canals of the United States still used for commercial purposes are 38 in number, with an aggregate length of 2,470 miles, and the total cost of construction is placed at about £41,000,000.

Canals projected are referred to in the summary, as also are many interesting particulars relating to the working of the world's artificial waterways. The effect of ship canals upon commerce is dealt with in an article by Mr. J. A. Fairlie, published some time since. Dealing with the later constructed ship canals, this authority says,—"There may be latent 'possibilities in the traffic of each of these canals, but thus far the great bulk of the trade they were intended to get remains undiverted from old routes, little new trade has been developed, and no important economic results have appeared. This, however, is not the case with the Suez and St. Mary's Canals." Although this was written four years ago, it cannot be said that the interval has shown reason why the statement then made should be materially altered or modified. Where great savings are effected, such as in the case of the Suez Canal and the North American navigable canals (St. Mary's), or in the case of the proposed Panama Isthmian Canal, it follows that trade will run thither, as it ever will flow through the channels of least resistance. Therefore, for canals to be successful, they must serve some great economic purpose, and their existence must be warranted for more tangible reasons than those which, for instance, constructed thus Manchester Ship Canal,

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#### ANOTHER SHIP CANAL PROJECT

According to the Paris correspondent of the "Morning Leader," the idea of a ship canal between the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean is gaining ground in France. It was discussed at the time of the Fashoda incident, and the troubles in Morocco have again given the scheme political importance. For many of its advocates frankly admit that one object in its construction would be to out-flank Gibraltar, so that in case of war with this country the French Atlantic squadron could reach any port in the Mediterranean without running the gauntlet. Such a theory overlooks the probability that England might, and doubtless would, seize the Atlantic entrance to the "Two Seas Canal." It is the mercantile point of view which will have most influence in settling the question. By a canal of 300 miles it is claimed that large steamers would save 1,200 miles journey, 67 hours time, and £250 in fuel. But this theory presumes that they are travelling to Marseilles, Genoa, or Leghorn. For the South of Italy, North Africa, the Levant, or Suez Canal the saving would be much less in time, whilst the gain in fuel would be more than lost by canal dues. Already passengers to India may avoid the Atlantic section of the journey by travelling overland to Marseilles or Brindisi, and the Eastern and Australian cargo liners would require low dues before they would change their route. Moreover, it will not be overlooked that France already enjoys a splendid canal system, connecting the river system of the Garonne with that of the Rhone, so that internal communication has little to benefit by the scheme. To expend £32,000,000 on a deep sea "ditch" requires considerable courage. To calculate that a rate of toll like that of the Suez Canal will bring in £2,500,000 yearly

assumes that all the British and German Eastern liners will make use of the "Two Seas Canal." We may call spirits "from the vasty deep," but, as Hotspur said, will they come? The originators of the Manchester Ship Canal showed, on paper, most attractive financial results, yet after being worked for eight years, the ordinary shareholders have as yet only "hope" for a dividend from the waterway. The French project would certainly be a "white elephant" if any friction arose between this country and France. On the other hand, if the French Chamber should support the proposal, and it comes to fruition, there is no doubt that British shipowners will promptly make use of any advantages offered, and in this respect the "Two Seas Canal" will act as a friendly link between England and her neighbours across the Channel.

1902-9-3 Glasgow Herald, Chinese canals

Inland Navigation.

The subject of inland navigation is a striking example of the difficulty of dealing with what, appears at first sight an extremely simple matter. By the treaty of Tientsin of 1858 British subjects got the right to travel under passport all over China, and by article 14 it was provided that, they could hire boats wherever they pleased. This right, to hire boats seems to have been interpreted at a very early date to mean Chinese boats of the kind in use when the treaty was made, which, of course, excluded vessels-propelled by steam. In course of time, however, Chinese were permitted to run steamers here and there on the canals and rivers wherever an official was sufficiently liberal-minded to allow them to do so. In particular, steamers were used for towing on the canals. and busy traffic of a precarious nature sprang tip, especially around the valleys of the Yang-tse and Canton rivers. Foreign merchants had for many years cried out for the right to run steamers and launches elsewhere than between treaty ports, and in 1898, during the political crisis, Sir Claude Macdonald succeeded in obtaining a concession from the Chinese Government that "foreigners equally with Chinese should be permitted to employ steamers and steam launches wherever the use of native boats was permitted by treaty. That is, in fact, everywhere. So far everything was satisfactory, and it might be thought that nothing remained except for foreigners to run their steamers. But the maritime customs of the treaty ports and the native customs at the non-treaty ports, and the likin collectors everywhere, had to be reckoned with. At length a series of regulations was produced of such an ingenious character that no steamer could at the same time satisfy them and be run at a profit. Thus the same steamer was not allowed to touch at treaty and non-treaty ports. If it left a treaty port and visited a non-treaty port, then it had to return before it could touch at another treaty port, and so on with an inextricable tangle of petty regulations which successfully strangled the trade. One British Consul in China, writing of the regulations, gave the following graphic analogy: --- "The concession is reduced to this. A tradesman in an English town may supply Nos. 1 and 20, situated at the respective ends of a street, by a van driven through that street. If, however, he has customers in the intervening houses, he must transfer his goods to another van, at whichever end of the street he pleases (he has that option) and, after supplying Nos. 2 to 19 from that end and that van only, he must return the way he entered, and on no account must he visit or pass the last house at the other end with his second van."