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## FAMOUS CANAL AT PORTAGE SLATED FOR "SCRAP HEAP"

### Cities Along Route of Badger Waterway Plan Protest to U. S.

By a Special Correspondent.

**PORTAGE, Wis.**—The famous government canal and locks at Portage, linking the Fox and Wisconsin rivers into a waterway connecting the great lakes with the Mississippi, is to be abandoned according to a communication received by mayors of cities along the route from the United States engineering department.

News of the plan to dispense with further maintenance and improvements came as a great blow to this city, Princeton, Berlin, Montello, Packwaukee, Endeavor and other points bordering the waterway, which was once an important freight transportation route but in recent years has been little used for commercial purposes.

Boats pass up this canal from Oshkosh and other points entering the Wisconsin river at Portage and going down through and connecting with the Mississippi river at Prairie du Chien and to the gulf of Mexico, making it possible with a proper riverway to travel from Milwaukee through Portage via the Fox river, government canal, and Wisconsin river to the Mississippi and to the gulf.

#### Protest Planned.

The official statement of government abandonment of the upper Fox improvement was received by Mayor S. H. Peck from Maj. F. S. Skinner and announced that the United States engineer's office in its report authorized by the act of congress is opposed to any further improvement of the upper Fox river from Oshkosh to Portage. The principal ground in the

official report by Maj. Skinner appears to be based "on the exceedingly small commerce on the Wolf river adjacent." The government report states that all interested parties have the privilege of an appeal from this conclusion to the board of engineers for rivers and harbors, a permanent body sitting at Washington to which all examination and survey reports of this character are referred.

Portage through its city officials is organizing to protest against this action as the general statement of business men and river men here is that if the government had given proper attention and prevented the deterioration of the upper Fox and the government canal at Portage, boat traffic would have been much greater.

All along the government canal sides here are hulks of fairly sized crafts whose owners were compelled to suffer a complete loss and abandon their boats because the government failed to keep the channel sufficiently dredged to travel. This summer, previous to the receipt of the abandonment of the upper river report, a government dredge appeared in Portage and for the first time in many years dredged the canal to a considerable extent, but boats between Fort Winnebago lock and Montello are unable to travel the Fox because of the condition of the river channel below.

"We hope that every town from Oshkosh to Portage will note the importance of this report on abandonment of river improvement here and ask that they get concerted protest action in motion immediately as the river channel between Oshkosh, Portage, Prairie du Chien and the gulf of Mexico is far too important to the commercial interests of the country to leave it go into utter ruin, besides the high water conditions of the Wisconsin river would make life and property very unsafe if the lock and river system would be abandoned by the government," said Mayor Peck of Portage to a Sentinel correspondent.

#### Important as Waterway.

Situated at the head of the government canal here is one of the growing marine boat engine and boat building concerns and the abandonment of the upper Fox by the government would mean much loss and perhaps a shutdown of the plant which manufactures craft complete and sends them via water to Oshkosh and Kilbourn as well as down river to Prairie du Chien.

The possibilities of the upper Fox river and the government canal between Oshkosh and Portage as a commercial advantage in keeping with the Milwaukee to the sea project may be judged by the fact that only a few

years ago the massive excursion boats Grand and Rapids passed from Milwaukee to Green Bay over Lake Michigan and then on the Fox river from Oshkosh to Portage and to Prairie du Chien, reaching their port at Little Rock, Ark., in perfect safety in charge of Capt. Cavanaugh, who piloted the boats from Grand Rapids, Mich.

The success of this venture prompted another large lake boat to attempt the trip some seasons later and the boat reached Oshkosh but was unable to proceed to Portage on account of the condition of the waterway. The big steamer was dismantled at Oshkosh by its owner and scrapped following another effort to continue his proposed trip to the gulf of Mexico via Portage.

Years ago Capt. Henry Steadman, Capt. Snyder and Capt. Bailey Grover and other pilots were in charge of the Ellen Hardy and the City of Berlin, excursion and freight boats plying between Oshkosh and Portage in successful competition of rail traffic.

