A BIT OF FIRST-HAND INFORMATION WITH LOCAL GEOGRAPHY.

The Belleville Ontario-Intelligencer runs an interesting column called "Looking Backward", which is of course, just what it says, i.e. items from their files of bygone years. On August sixteenth they reproduced a splendid bit of interesting and important news, exactly as they first sent it out in 1889, fifty years ago.

Because the Murray Canal, and Presqu'Ile Point as a Summer resort, have been taken for granted for two generations around here, it may be hard for many of our readers to visualize the scene as the writer of fifty years ago depicts it. Harder still it may be, for many of us, to imagine a large gathering such as he describes, which included four members of Parliament and at which no speeches were made. It almost gives the youth of today a chance to say that their ancestors failed to grasp all the opportunities which came their way.

50 Years Ago (August 16, 1889)

The oldest inhabitant will tell you that when he or she was a boy or girl, the question of the building of a canal at the western extremity of the Bay of Quinte to connect with Lake Ontario was talked about, but until yesterday no boat ever passed between the two bodies of water. The present government, in the year 1882, granted a sum of money towards the construction of the canal and on the 31st day of August in that year the first sod was cut and the contract let to Messrs. Silcox & Mowry; the former later retired from the firm and the completion of the work left in the hands of the latter. The canal proper is 5¼ miles in length, 50 feet wide and 13½ feet in depth. The canal is spanned by four fine iron bridges, the foundation for three of which was supplied from the Ox Point quarries and the iron bridges from the works of the Weddell Bridge Company of Trenton. Through the courtesy of Mr. H. Corby, M. P., many citizens, including Mayor W. Jeffers Diamond and the members of the city council, Mr. Thomas Ritchie, President of the Board of Trade, Col. Strong, American consul here, and many other prominent citizens, joined a number of the prominent citizens of Trenton yesterday in formally opening the Murray Canal. Arriving at the canal three boats loaded with people; (with the Trenton Band playing on one of the boats) steamed through the canal as far as Brighton Wharf where a stop was made and where lay at the wharf the yacht Surprise, Commodore Forbes in command, which was the first boat to pass through the canal. Later the excursionists proceeded to Presqu'Ile, which in the near future will become famous as a summer resort. At present there are many campers there. It was with regret that the party sailed for home. We noticed the following prominent persons present from a distance and from Trenton: Hon. Mackenzie Bowell, Minister of Customs; Mr. Cochrane, M.P.; Mr. H. Corby, M.P.; Mr. G. W. Ostrom, M.P.P.; Mr. D: Gilmour and Mayor Morrison of Trenton. Although there were four members of Parliament present in the party, no speeches were made.