

COMMERCE.

1st. Increase in the size of vessels.

In 1859, 36 of the largest propellers on the Great Lakes averaged about 700 tons net register. The largest was 981 tons and the smallest of this number 583. The draft when fully loaded was about 11 feet, greatest draft $11\frac{1}{2}$ ft. Without tracing the growth of intermediate steps, it may be stated that in 1890, what is called the business fleet of the Great Lakes consisted of 2055 vessels of 826,360 net register tons. Its value is \$58,125,500. Of these 1153 are steam vessels, 232 of these steamers are over 1000 tons register, 110 are over 1500 tons, and half of the larger class range from 1600 to over 2100 tons net register, and carry a cargo of from 2850 net tons to over 3700. The draft of these vessels is at present limited by the depths of the channels and harbours, being a maximum of about $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet, but many of them could safely and profitably load to 19 or 20 feet.

The Inland Lloyd Register of 1886 shows a total valuation of Lake vessels of \$30,597,450 against \$58,128,500 in 1890. The type of vessels also has greatly changed. In 1886 there were only 21 steamers of over 1500 net register tons. In 1890 there were 110 such steamers. In 1886 there were six steel vessels on the lakes valued at \$694,000. In 1890 there are 68 valued at \$11,964,500. The Census of 1890 shows that there was carried on the Great Lakes in 1889 27,417,598 net tons of cargo. The increase of commerce upon the Great Lakes may be appreciated from the increase in and out of Lake Superior. In 1870 the entire amount passing through the St. Mary's Falls Canal was 690,826 net registered tons; in 1880, 1,734,800 tons; in 1883, 2,042,259; in 1887, 4,897,598; in 1889, 7,221,935; in 1890, 8,454,435; and the actual weight of cargo carried in 1890 was 9,041,213 net tons. The value of this tonnage has increased as follows: in 1881 it was \$28,965,612.94; in 1885, \$53,413,472.13; in 1889, \$82,732,527.15; in 1890, \$102,214,948.70.

An excellent summary and comparison of lake commerce made by London *Engineering* of date September 26th, 1890, is here given for the purpose of showing forcibly and reliably the vast importance of the commerce of the great lakes:—

“A recent article in Bradstreet's gives some surprising statistics of the commerce of the Great Lakes. During 234 days of navigation last year, tonnage passed through the Detroit River to the amount of 10,000,000 tons more than the entries and clearances of all the sea-ports in the United States, and 3,000,000 tons more than the combined