

This will greatly amplify the volume from that portion which has heretofore sent its trade to the Lakes, while it will extend its area to sections heretofore tributary to other routes. The Rock Island Railroad was the first to connect the Lakes with the Mississippi. It was opened in February 1854, and has had a large freight trade from that river. In the fall of 1853, I made a journey from the Mississippi at Rock Island West, 180 miles to *Ft. des Moines*. I found but few people on the route, but they were looking to the opening of Railroads to Chicago as their course of trade. And it may be remarked, that the Western people generally, for obvious reasons, prefer the Lake route.

It will be conceded that the City of New York is the principal centre of American commerce, and the products of the West that take the Mississippi route, have, to a large extent, to be carried to New York for a market. And as the Lake route has the advantage of more favourable climate, it must be preferred even with some increase in the expense of transport.

The Pork trade has heretofore been mostly confined to the river cities. The Railroads will transfer the most of this to the Lake ports, and instead of Cincinnati and St. Louis being the great packing establishments, we must look for them at Milwaukee, Chicago, Toledo, and Cleveland, as the great centres of packing for Pork and Beef.

In his able report on the enlarged Erie Canal for 1853, W. J. McAlpine, Esq., then Chief Engineer of New York, shows that the trade of the Mississippi, above the mouth of the Ohio will be directed to the Lakes.

The diversion by routes that must cross the Alleghany range of Mountains, cannot materially affect the volume of Lake commerce.

The area of the territory tributary to the commerce of the Lakes, and lying east of the Missouri River, may be estimated at over 300,000 square miles, and that west of the Missouri at 250,000 square miles. The latter is yet a wild Prairie, and from its inland position will only be able to send the more valuable productions of Agriculture to an Atlantic market. But it has a fertile soil, and will be brought into cultivation, and must eventually contribute largely to swell the volume of the Western Lake commerce. Of the 300,000 square miles east of the Missouri not more than one-eighth is now occupied by settlement, with this sparse population, and its surplus production to a large extent drawn to supply its large ingress of new settlers; it furnished in 1853, an Eastern bound tonnage for the Erie Canal, as before observed of 1,213,690 tons—and a western bound tonnage, *viz* Erie Canal during the same time of 261,752 tons. In the