

James Fisher, Q. C., M. P. P., from the province of Manitoba, on behalf of the Canadian delegation.

MR. FISHER'S RESPONSE.

Mr. Chairman, Your Worship, and Gentlemen: I arise very gladly at the call to add a word to what has been so aptly said in acknowledgment of the kindly greeting and reception extended to the delegates to this convention. I want to say that we do very gratefully appreciate the very hearty welcome that has been extended to us by the municipal authorities of this city; and more than that, we feel indebted to his worship, the mayor, for the kindly words of sympathy and encouragement with which he has spoken in reference to the objects of this association. (Applause.) I echo with all my heart everything that has been said by my friend Howland and my friend Smalley as to the pleasure with which we visit Cleveland.

When we look upon the aims of our meeting here to-day, I regard Cleveland as an object lesson for us all—an object lesson to those who are studying the effect of water transportation upon commerce. I therefore feel that it was eminently proper that the very first convention of the International Deep Waterways association should be called in this city.

I have come, perhaps, the farthest of any delegate to attend this convention—by rail nearly fourteen hundred miles. I have come all that way to tell you of our interest in the movement which has been taken hold of by this association since we met in Toronto a year ago. I come from a province in the northwest of which, perhaps, the people here know very little; but it is unsurpassed in this wide world for richness of soil, for the luxuriance of its grasses, for the beef it produces and for its wheat. We produce the sweetest, purest and most toothsome cheese that is exported from any country. We have the land of the brightest sunshine and the most delightful climate. It is invigorating, (laughter), I grant you, but delightful nevertheless. It is cold up there, but we don't feel it. The only trouble with us is, we are a long distance away from the markets of the world, and we are hampered by the cost of transportation. Our coal costs us from \$12 to \$14 a ton. Last year it came down as low as \$8.75 for the coal I burn in my furnace. This year we hope to get it for \$8.50. We would have to pay \$20 if it were not for the lake route. We get our coal brought from Buffalo and Cleveland to Port Arthur for 25 cents to 30 cents a ton. One season it was brought for 10 cents a ton. But when it gets there we have to carry it 400 miles by rail, hence the high cost.

Now I said I was from the far northwest, but let me qualify. The far northwest extends a thousand miles beyond, not Winnipeg, but the farthest boundary of our province of Manitoba. Our wheat fields extend a thousand miles beyond our province, and 1,200 miles beyond the city of Winnipeg. The greatest part of that country would be tributary to the great water route extending through the lakes to the Atlantic seaboard. The prosperity of that country is dependant upon that water route. It is for this reason I have come here to represent that great northwestern province which is seeking deliverance from the misfortune we are suffering from, namely, high rates of transportation. I will say by way of encouragement to the