

better and more adequate facilities for the movement of traffic and these can only be secured by utilizing the waterways which Providence has provided for our use.

Every increase in the cost of transportation is an additional tax which must be paid by the consumer and every reduction in rates is a direct benefit to the individual.

The construction of a deep waterway from the lakes to the sea will inevitably result in the lowering of rail rates to an extent that will be a revelation to those who have been advocating the necessity for permitting the carrying companies to make a material advance in transportation tolls. I want to say to you, and it is capable of proof, that the railway companies today are making greater net profits from the carriage of traffic than at any time since they became common carriers and yet there are railway commissioners and shippers in this country who are using their influence to secure for the railways an advance in rates and still larger profits. It makes very little difference to them what rates are charged, as the consumer must pay the additional expense, whatever it may be.

If we, as individuals, do our duty the day is not far distant when we will see ocean vessels plying to and from the ports on the Great Lakes and it is not necessary for me to enlarge to you what that will mean to this country. This is not an idle dream; it is simply a statement of fact, a fact so easily within our reach that when it is accomplished we will view with amazement the delay which has taken place in undertaking the work, and yet this delay is not hard to understand when the whole factors are taken into consideration.

The first settlements were located within easy reach of the rivers and lakes so that the settlers would be in a position to take advantage of their transportation facilities. Gradually, however, they wandered farther inland and as they receded from the waterways the necessity for other means of transportation became apparent, and with a realization of that necessity came the creation of the steam railways. In the first stages of rail construction the lines were built to reach the water front and the traffic was then sent forward to its ultimate destination by water. This period might properly be called the era of "Rail and Water" transportation in this country. In the course of time the management of the railways began to grasp the possibility of securing for themselves the entire earnings from the carriage of this traffic to the seaboard and, once seized with that idea, their energies were directed to the construction of new lines making connection with those already in existence and always getting closer to the sea, until by and by, a through rail route was secured from the interior to the ocean and, so far as foreign trade was concerned, the boat lines were driven out of the business. This was followed by the amalgamation of the different short lines of railway throughout the country, resulting ultimately in the formation of the great trunk lines of the present day, and the whole of their tremendous powers have been used relentlessly to crush competition by water and to prevent the development and improvement of the waterways for transportation purposes.

When these circumstances are taken into consideration it is not difficult to understand why we have been so dilatory in taking advantage of the water route for the carriage of foreign traffic. We find, however, that all such matters right themselves in their own good time, and the inability of the railways to handle promptly and expeditiously the rapidly increasing trade of the country, combined with their failure to deal equitably with the public in transportation matters, brought about a feeling that a change was necessary; the people again began to look to the waterways for relief and, after careful consideration, the tremendous possibilities of this channel of transportation impressed themselves upon the minds of those interested and it was realized that it was readily within our power to make every lakeport a seaport and have ocean vessels discharge and load their cargoes at our inland docks.