

It is a remarkable fact that there are but few natural harbors on the lakes, the shores differing in that respect from the seacoasts of the United States, and of the northern colonies, which are amply provided with the finest harbors.

While the commerce of Chicago, Buffalo, Oswego, and other lake ports, is of more value than the commerce of any of the ports on the Atlantic, except New Orleans, Boston, and New York, the harbors of the lake ports, even whilst their commerce is yet in its infancy, are wholly inadequate to the number of vessels already on the lakes. The numerous disasters in consequence of the insecurity of these harbors, call loudly for the improvement of such havens as can be made secure and convenient by artificial means.

The commercial and navigating interests in that section have from the outset been sensible of the drawbacks arising from the absence of security to life and property, and have unceasingly presented their claims for the artificial improvement of their harbors to the consideration of the State and Federal governments.

At a public meeting held at Milwaukee, in 1837, with reference to the improvement of harbors, it was "*Resolved*, That we will not desist from memorializing and petitioning Congress, and presenting our just rights and claims, until we have finally accomplished our object." The spirit of this resolution, it cannot be doubted, is the prevailing sentiment throughout the entire West, connected by its trade with the lakes.

It is not presumed, in any part of this report, to argue the question of the constitutionality of such improvements by the federal government; but it is unquestionably due to that great interest, and to the preservation of life and property, to state that a great and pressing necessity exists for the construction of harbors on the lakes by some authority, State or Federal, and by some means; and whether these should be public or private, enlightened statesmen must decide. The work should be done. If the government of the United States, sustained by the patriotic affection of the people, is restrained by the constitutional compact from doing things undeniably needed for the promotion of important national interests and the security of its citizens and their property, some other means of relief should be devised. If it does possess adequate constitutional power, it should be exercised.

The past action on this subject has paralyzed, rather than aided, many improvements. Harbors and havens, the construction of which was commenced by government, have not been completed, and are in a state of dilapidation; and while the public have waited for farther aid, many valuable lives and great amounts of property have been lost. It is extremely doubtful (even if there were sufficient local wealth, and if we could allow the expectation of that unity of action in the vicinity of the lake coast necessary to secure the construction of any one of the many harbors and havens their lake commerce now so absolutely requires) whether they could be completed without Federal aid.

The undersigned begs leave to call the attention of the honorable Secretary of the Treasury to the necessity of having marine hospitals in the large commercial ports upon the lakes. The casualties of that navigation are little different from those of the sea; and while the "fresh-water sailor" contributes, from his monthly wages, to the same "hospital

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