

products of more than half the continent. Chicago alone has no less than thirteen great trunk railways radiating from her as a common centre, and bringing to her docks the products of every farm between the lakes and the Rocky mountains.

#### PLAN OF DEFENCE.

In regard to the general plan of the defences of the lakes and northern frontier, the committee have conferred with the general commanding the army and Brigadier General Totten, of the engineers department, and have adopted, to a considerable extent, their suggestions.

We respectfully urge upon the consideration of Congress the following plan of defences of the northern frontier:

*First.* The establishment of shore defences at some commanding positions. This will require the erection of some new fortifications and the repair and completion of some already located.

*Second.* Taking into consideration the great superiority in the American merchant marine on the upper lakes (meaning all the lakes above the Falls of Niagara) in ships, steamers, and sailors, we regard our supremacy on the lakes as dependent in a great degree upon our having the means at hand of arming the merchant marine on short notice. To this end the committee recommend the establishment of a national foundry on the upper lakes, and three naval depots, one on Lake Ontario, one on Lake Erie, and the other on Lake Michigan.

*Third.* We earnestly recommend for military, not less than commercial purposes, the improvement of the harbors on the lakes, the dredging out and widening of the channel over the St. Clair flats.

*Fourth.* The enlargement of the Illinois and Michigan canal.

#### *In regard to shore defences.*

The entrance to Lake Superior is through the Sault Ste. Marie canal, a work which cost about two millions of dollars, and it is too important to be overlooked. The mineral region of Lake Superior is probably richer in iron and copper than any other in the world; and the iron has been found to be superior in quality, for many purposes, to any other known. These mines have been rapidly developed, and now constitute a most important national interest. Old Fort Brady is represented as commanding the entrance to Lake Superior, and an appropriation for its repair, or a new fort more eligibly situated for the purpose, is recommended.

A military road from *Bay de Noquet*, on Green bay, to Marquette, or some other point, on Lake Superior, and an early completion of the railroad from Appleton to Lake Superior, would afford additional communication with this great lake; and both of these are of great importance for military reasons, and are earnestly recommended to the favorable consideration of Congress. Probably the most important strategic place on the lakes is the Straits of Mackinaw. This strait con-