

branches of the Saskatchewan have been the great lines of travel of the Hudson's Bay Company. It is through that country they have established their many posts. I propose in this connection simply to refer to these streams geographically. In another part of my address I shall refer to them more as avenues of travel and of commerce.

The Mississippi has also its source in this region, furnishing with its tributaries a long course of waters navigable by steamers, and affording a very close connection both with Lake Superior and the Red river of the north; and the Red river of the north, flowing northward, and in a direction opposite to that of the Mississippi, is also navigable within our own borders several hundred miles for steamers, and makes the connection between our own system of rivers and those which flow into Lake Winnipeg and Hudson's bay.

But the great feature of the northern portion of the American continent is the water line of the great lakes, which stretch more than half way across from the Atlantic to the Pacific; a fact of deep significance, when we consider that vessels, without breaking bulk, can pass thence to Europe, either by the Canadian canals and the St. Lawrence, or by the New York canals and the Hudson.

Thus, then, we find that the country which we are describing, geographically, is one of great natural water lines across the continent—the great lakes, the Mississippi, the Red river of the north, the Missouri, the two branches of the Saskatchewan, and the Columbia. If we look to the extreme southern portion of the country under consideration, we find it deficient in navigable streams. After leaving the Missouri, its tributaries in the vicinity of the route, the Kansas, the Platte, and the Running Water, are unnavigable; and we do not come to navigable streams again until we have crossed the Sierra Nevada, and gone far down into the valley of the Sacramento.