

The St. Lawrence and Lake Frontier, extending from a point opposite Cornwall, on the St. Lawrence, in the forty-fifth degree of latitude, westward through the Lakes and connecting Rivers, to Isle Royal, on the western coast of Lake Superior, includes a shore line within our territory of more than three thousand miles, and forms a navigable water boundary for eight of the most important States of the Union, with an aggregate population, in 1860, of over nine millions. Directly upon this coast, and conveniently accessible for attacks from the water, there are congregated, in cities, towns and villages, a population of near a million of our citizens, surrounded by all the material wealth incident to a high state of agricultural, manufacturing and commercial prosperity.

From these cities, and through these Lakes and Rivers, more than one hundred millions of bushels of grain, including wheat manufactured into flour, and other agricultural products in proportion, are already distributed annually to New York, New England and the Atlantic cities North of and including Baltimore, for the consumption of those States and for exportation to foreign countries.

This vast agricultural production, yet literally in its infancy, is carried forward on the Lakes by more than sixteen hundred steam and sail vessels, measuring, in the aggregate, full five hundred thousand tons, which return westward freighted with foreign and domestic merchandise. The annual value of this trade exceeds four hundred millions of dollars.

While the Westward-bound commerce is highly important to the comfort and convenience of our Western fellow-citizens, their agricultural products are indispensable to the East. The arrest of this commerce, even for a brief period, would create a state of suffering and destitution to the inhabitants of New York and New England unparalleled in the history of our country. And yet, as it were, right under the guns of a foreign nation, jealous of our commercial prosperity and increasing national power, and constantly assuming a threatening attitude to-