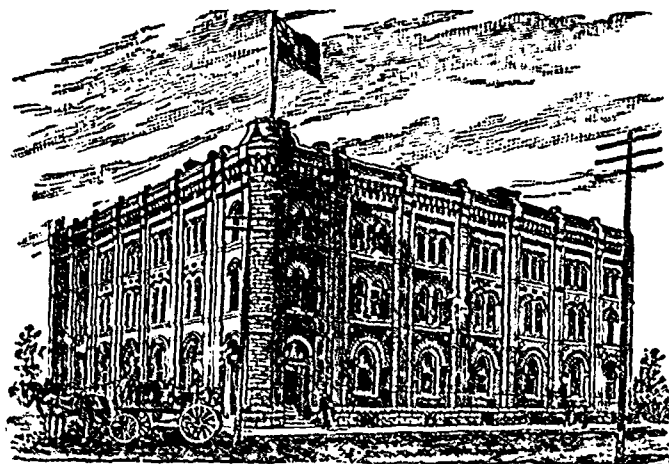


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### The Waterways Convention.

The *Engineering Record* says of the waterways convention to assemble at Detroit on the 17th inst.: "It is understood that it will demand appropriations from Congress for improving the lake channels, and the appointment of a commission to report on some project for connecting the lakes with the Atlantic. The first project embraces the continuance of the work on the new lock at the St. Mary's Falls, dredging in Hay Lake, St. Clair flats and on the Grosse Pointe channel, with the removal of minor obstructions. These channels require a width of from 500 to 800 feet at Grosse Pointe, at which latter point a commerce exceeding 20,000,000 tons annually is now passing. Depths of 20 and 21 feet will be asked for. As dependent upon this, if not a part of it, a demand will be made for deepening and enlarging the principal harbors on the lakes. This is thought to be the subject of the greatest and most immediate importance that will come

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before the convention, and it does not seem that there can be any divided interests as to this, nor any valid argument against it except a demand for economy in immediate expenditures. It can, however, easily be shown by comparing General Poe's official report on the traffic of the 'Soo' canal with the average freight rate on the railroads of this country as returned in 'Poor's Manual' that the saving on the cost of transporting the freight which passed through the canal in 1889 was over \$16,000,000 as compared with a like service by railroads. And the total expenditures by government on the lakes above Niagara Falls have been but little over \$28,000,000. Under these circumstances it will be very hard to convince those interested in cheaper transportation that there is any economy from delay in improving the channels of so large and profitable a commerce.

"The demand for a navigable channel of like depth with those of the lakes, connecting the lakes with tidewater, which seems growing in

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volume and intensity, will be apt to meet opposition from the elevator interests at Buffalo and from others, who doubt if the profits or savings on transportation through the canal will return a fair interest on the very heavy investment required for its construction, while the railroads, which have seen their freight charges cut down through the competition of the existing waterways, will oppose this part of the convention's demand bitterly. These combined interests will doubtless be able to materially delay the inception of the work, though it is to be hoped they cannot prevent the appointment of a commission of engineers to report on the subject."

### Freight Rates.

The *Chicago Trade Bulletin*, of December 21, says. "The railroads have made considerable progress towards moving cars the past week, and part of the blockade was raised. The western roads in a number of instances have run grain directly to store, and by so doing prevented further accumulation of cars on sidetracks. The eastern roads have, by hard work, succeeded in cleaning up part of the accumulation of cars and during the closing days several roads announced that they would receive cars from western connections. The railroads have never seen a time in their existence when all their facilities were so taxed as at present. Indications point to a continued large business and a surplus of cars is not to be expected the rest of the winter. All rail rates are well maintained on the basis of 25c on flour and grain, and 30c on provisions to New York. Though business was restricted by the car blockade and little was done. Ocean rates were weaker and lower, with liberal offerings of room. Through rates to Liverpool were quotable at 41½ to 44½c on flour, 43 on grain, and 42½ to 63½c on provisions. A little inquiry existed for vessel room to load and store grain until the opening of navigation. There is about 5,000,000 bushels of grain tonnage in port, and several charters have been made. The asking price is 5½c for wheat to Buffalo."