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## THE SITUATION.

In his speech welcoming the members of the Deep Waterways Conference, Mayor Kennedy traced the lines of action on which, in his opinion, success was to be sought in obtaining a 20-foot channel from Lake Superior to the Atlantic. This plan is that the Governments of Ottawa and Washington should make a joint effort to achieve the desired result. That such joint action is not impossible he suggested by reference to a Congressional resolution of 1892, looking in this direction. Broadly considered, there can be no doubt that a 20-foot water channel would offer a cheaper means of transportation than rail, or any existing channel of communication; and though there are many obstacles in the way of its realization, he would be a bold man who should undertake to foretell that it will never be obtained. It is quite true that our canal system, as it stands at present, has not been made the most of; but this can scarcely be urged as an argument against ultimate enlargement. The fact that no fixed elevators have been built to aid transshipment, at Kingston, may be due to an unacknowledged suspicion that the present system was destined to be superseded by one in which transshipment would not be necessary. On any other supposition it is inexplicable. In the absence of fixed elevators, at this point, we at least escape the possible evil, complained of in the State of New York, of an Elevator combine, and we are in a position to take a lesson from the experience of that State, if the necessity should ever arise.

Though Col. Davidson, of St. Paul, suggested a possible rival of the St. Lawrence route in the Mississippi, no real rivalry is, in the nature of things, possible. Canada, beyond all question, possesses the best route by which the produce of the Western Atlantic slope can reach the ocean. If it were developed to its full capacity, it is difficult to believe that American produce would not seek this channel in great quantities. The question of enlargement has a commercial side which must not be lost sight of. If we would fairly estimate the advantages of a scheme of enlargement, we must ascertain whether and what profit it would bring. Governments have no money except what they take from the people. And we cannot afford to ignore the anomalous fact that the little Erie canal beats the great St. Lawrence river and canals. Is this state of things likely to continue

under enlargement? Can the Erie be made a great ship canal, a potential rival of the St. Lawrence for all time to come? This is one of the questions for consideration. If the improbable happens now, in canal rivalry, might it not continue to happen after enlargement? New York will do whatever is possible still further to develop the Erie; But a free, enlarged Erie might destroy the chance of making a twenty-foot water-way in Canada profitable.

Mr. Cooley, of Chicago, signalized the anomaly in connection with canal navigation, to which reference has already been made. "There had not been a time," he said, "when there was not a better route down the St. Lawrence than down the Erie Canal, and yet there had never been a time when there was not more freight down the Erie Canal than down the St. Lawrence." This state of the facts, whatever the cause, has to be looked steadily in the face. The spirit that contributes to this result is, if we may rely on this speaker, a somewhat exclusive patriotism which resolves to use a National Route. "There is not," he said, "a city west of Detroit that would not endeavor to obtain a route to the sea that would render them [the United States] independent of everybody." In this spirit Canada built her Intercolonial and her Pacific railways. It is this feeling which causes Mr. Thompson, of Duluth, to advocate a canal from Oswego to the Hudson River, in reference to the deepening of the St. Lawrence canals. And Mr. Cooley wishes to confine the local traffic to his own country; and with this object in view he advocates a canal route *via* Lake Champlain, through the New England States to New York. The Chicago canal, connecting with the Mississippi, now being constructed at a cost of about two-thirds of the Manchester canal, has his approbation, for the same reason. If we may believe delegates who take a somewhat exclusive view of the matter, the Americans are successfully fighting against geography to control fate. They are able to say, by the mouth of Mr. Cooley, that "foreign traffic [on the canals] is but a drop in the bucket."

In this canal question another element besides national sentiment plays a part. Local interests make themselves felt in the early stages of the question. One plan is to connect the Mississippi, at St. Paul, with Lake Superior; another to build the Chicago Sanitary Canal; the latter is already under construction, while the former has not got beyond the survey stage. St. Paul and Chicago are in opposition to one another, in the advocacy of these schemes, and Chicago has got a good start in the race. In Canada, canal enlargement equally arouses local interests. Montreal and Quebec are opposed to a 20 foot channel on the ground that they might both be made way ports. Toronto, if called upon to decide, would probably declare for enlargement. These local interests are potent in the early stages of a great movement like canal enlargement, but in the end the questions settle themselves. At present it is doubtful whether the Government could obtain a vote of the necessary amount, \$75,000,000 probably, if it were willing to try. If the question is ever settled in the affirmative it will be settled by the teeming millions that will in future take up their abode in the North-West.

If Mr. Cooley is right in his theory that "the domestic transportation determines the line of foreign shipment," so long as the United States contains a vastly larger population than Canada, we cannot hope to divert the canal traffic to the St. Lawrence. If Mr. Cooley's theory can be established, it would rise to the dignity of a law; and might be quoted as "the Cooley law," in the same way as we talk of the Gresham law. This much is certain: The supplies necessary to support the population of the