

the Great Lakes. This has been appreciated by the commercial men most conversant with the conditions, but to the general public the necessity for larger channels has not always been apparent, and appeals for appropriations by Governments for such enlarged channels have been met with opposition.

Without regard to state or national lines, commercial men of Canada and of the northwest of the United States have generally been in accord on the subject of an enlarged water-way to the Atlantic seaboard. As long ago as 1863 a National Ship Canal Convention was held at Chicago, and 5000 delegates from all parts of the United States were in attendance. The special object of this Convention was to advocate the enlargement of the canals between the Valley of the Mississippi and the Atlantic.

In 1865 it was urged by an able advocate of water-way enlargement that the commerce of the Northwest had increased to so great a magnitude, that it had outgrown the Erie Canal and demanded a through route, not only to the Atlantic seaboard for its vessels, but to Liverpool; and it was asked: "Why should the lake cities with their wealth and resources not import for themselves and transact their own business? The ocean is the prerogative of no state of the Union, and the West will seek the channel which conducts its commerce with the least cost and delay."

Before the canals through New York State and Canada were even laid out, the inland seas of the continent were regarded as of so great importance, that a full and adequate ship canal from them to the ocean was looked upon as absolutely necessary. To obtain this has been the dream of commercial men during the last three-quarters of a century. That it has not been realized is due largely to the fact, that the natural water-way lies through two countries that have, as political divisions, nothing in common. There has not existed the union of action necessary to fully carry out the great projects desired by commerce. These projects have therefore never been taken up as a connected whole and pushed forward to legitimate conclusions.

It is well known that between the important ports on Lakes Michigan and Superior and Liverpool there are over four thousand miles of water navigation, and that only about 71 of them are restricted by natural obstacles in the channels. The object of this paper is to ascertain, if possible, how these natural obstacles placed here and there in the pathway of commerce may be removed, and steamships may be built on the Great Lakes to ply between their ports and the ports of the Atlantic seaboard and of the Old World.