

## Importance of Waterways

Dealing with the Soo question, the Joint Commission reported in part as follows:—

Upon the organization of the International Waterways Commission it found the most pressing matter coming within its jurisdiction was the regulation of the use by private corporations of the waters of St. Mary's River in connection with the control of those waters for the protection of navigation at present and in the future.

The extent of the commerce on the Great Lakes is well illustrated by official statistics of the amount of freight which passed the locks at Sault Ste. Marie during the season of navigation of 1905, which amounted to more than forty-four million net tons. To this should be added the local tonnage, which is considerable, and the large traffic between ports on Lakes Michigan and Huron and the East, making a total lake traffic of between fifty and sixty million tons. The immense importance of transportation by the Great Lakes, and the consequent necessity of protecting and facilitating it in the interest of the public, becomes apparent when we consider that the ability to transport by lake must have resulted, during the season of 1905, in saving many millions of dollars. The average rate for transportation of Lake Superior freights in 1905 was \$0.0085 per ton-mile, while from the best information obtainable the transportation rate by rail between Lake Superior points and the East is not less than \$0.04 per ton-mile. The ton-mile saving over railroad transportation was, therefore, at least \$0.0315. The average haul of the freight mentioned was eight hundred thirty-three and three-tenths miles. The total number of tons of freight that passed the Sault locks in 1905 was 44,270,680, and it follows that in this year there was an aggregate saving through lake transportation on Lake Superior through freight alone of approximately \$116,000,000. In other words, by transporting the Lake Superior freight on the Great Lakes \$116,000,000 were saved in 1905, to the producers of raw materials, the manufacturer and the consumer, and the saving to manufacturers has made it possible for them to supply the home markets and compete in those of foreign countries.

The growth of commerce upon the Great Lakes in the past few years, and its prospective immense increase in the future, has convinced the Commission that steps should be taken, not merely to preserve the lake levels, but to retain absolute control of all waters which go to maintain those levels, and of all lands which may be useful or necessary, at present or in the future, to increase navigation facilities. The Commission is, therefore, decidedly of the opinion that the Governments of the United States and Canada should act in unison in controlling absolutely, any and all diversions at Sault Ste. Marie, so that the waters of the river may be available at any time when needed for navigation.

The increase in the size of vessels navigating the lakes has been rapid. In 1880 lake vessels reached a length of 200 feet, in 1890 400 feet, in 1902 500 feet, and 6 vessels 600 feet in length will be put in service during 1906. In 1904 there were only forty boats in the Lake Superior trade, with a capacity of 8,000 tons or more, while 32 additional vessels will be in commission during 1906, none of which will have a cargo capacity of less than 8,000 tons. The combined cargo capacity of these 32 new boats will be about 338,000 tons for a single trip, and they will constitute an addition of about 20 per cent. to the carrying capacity of the fleet engaged in the transportation of ore from Lake Superior.

The quantity of freight passing to and from Lake Superior has doubled twice in the past thirteen years, it being 44,270,680 tons in 1905, about four times what it was in 1902. The value of the cargoes passing the Sault canal in 1905 was \$416,065,484, iron, including ore and manufactured iron, constituting 27 per cent. of this value, and cereals 28 per cent.

The development of the power of the St. Mary's rapids has been projected and carried on by practically two interests—the Chandler-Dunbar and allied interests and The Lake Superior Corporation with its subordinate companies, The Lake Superior Power Co., and The Michigan Lake Superior Power Co.

It is apparent that the actual present use of water for power purposes is nearly equal to the amount of flow obstructed by the works of all the power development companies considered as a unit, and it is clear that the amount of water required for the proposed additions to present power developments is so great as to call for complete control of