

believes that the excavation outside of Fishing point was wholly responsible for the increased erosion of the banks of Pelee island. It is also the opinion of all local engineers, as well as of every individual who has witnessed the destruction going on, that the removal of the sand is totally responsible for the destruction that has occurred. Appeals have been made to the Ontario Government, and also to the Dominion Government, at different times, not only through representatives and solicitors, but through deputations from both Pelee island and the mainland, and at all times the answer received was that their engineers' reports were to the effect that the removal of the sand and gravel was not the cause of the excessive erosion going on, but that it was due wholly to natural causes.

In the meantime, however, all leases have been cancelled, and to-day there remain the two patented water lots, one of which—namely, the one at the south end of Pelee island—is owned and controlled by an American company known as the Sandusky Sand Company, managed by a firm called Homegardner & Hendrickson. This lot is partly land above water and partly under water. The other is on the bar projecting out from Point Pelee. The difficulty now seems to be that the Ontario Government cannot cancel these patents, as they are owned outright, and the only thing that can be done is for the municipality or the Government, who are being damaged, to take action through the courts to restrain further operations and to obtain redress for damages done. A letter under date of March 27, 1919, written to me by Mr. J. G. Kerr, of Chatham, Ontario, solicitor for the municipality of Pelee island, explains the position the island is in with regard to this matter, as follows:

I am writing you at the request of the council of the township of Pelee. The reeve and clerk and Mr. Barnes, one of the councillors, have been in consultation with me for some time to-day with regard to the litigation that the island is having with the parties who are dredging for gravel at the south of the island. I started an action for the township with the approval of the Attorney-General for Ontario about a month ago, and so that you may understand exactly what is in question, I am sending you herewith a copy of the statement of claim that has been filed and served in that action. The defendants have not yet put in their statement of defence, but from correspondence that I have had with their solicitors, it is quite plain to me now that I cannot force them to a trial this spring. The council is very much concerned about the matter. It is one of life and death in so far as Pelee island is concerned. The menace is growing and already on several occasions the water has

broken over the drainage embankments and the islanders are convinced that unless they get some protection and get it shortly there is going to be some very great damage done in the near future. It is apparent to me that even if the island succeeds in the litigation it is still going to be necessary to construct some artificial protection along the shore. This has been reported on from time to time by Government engineers and township engineers, but there is a report made by the district engineer at Windsor in 1915 on file in the Public Works Department in which there are some specific recommendations by that engineer along the line of construction of groins. I think the engineer in his report goes extensively into the enormous profits that these gravel operators are making and suggests that by taxation they could be made to bear a substantial part of any expense incurred by the Government. The islanders are not inclined to concede anything to these gravel operators as they are absolutely convinced that the erosion has been very greatly increased by their operations. They have excavated a great basin to the south of the island so that now where formerly there were sand banks and accumulations of sand that were really dry land nearly the year round there is from ten to thirty feet of water. A great many acres of dry land have already been washed away and the erosion is going on at such a rate that unless something is done there is no question but what Pelee island will be in the course of a few years reduced to just those parts of the island which consist of rock formation and that would mean practically the destruction of the island. The district engineer in the report that I have mentioned strongly recommends works of protection and further points out that it is the duty of the Government to do these works. For some reason or another, the matter was not followed up in 1915. But the council feels now that a determined effort ought to be made to get the Government to take some action.

There are two lines upon which the Dominion Government can act. The one would be to stop the gravel operations and the other would be to construct works of protection. I understand that the United States Government has put a stop long ago to all similar operations in their part of lake Erie and the council would like to press upon the Government the necessity of stopping these excavations, either by some express act of the Government or by imposing such an export tax upon gravel as to make the business unprofitable. You probably know who the men are that are conducting these operations. They are German Americans in Sandusky and they are making enormous profits, and neither the Dominion Government nor the Ontario Government nor the township of Pelee are deriving any revenue from them. They, of course, have plenty of money and will no doubt be able to get engineers to contend that the dredging operations are not the cause of the trouble. They can show, of course, that erosion is going on elsewhere but the men on the island know that since these dredging operations have assumed the large scale they have that the erosion on the island is doubling in force and in intensity. They know that since these dredging operations began all the natural protection which formerly existed has been swept away. It is almost self-evident that the construction of a huge basin at the south of the island would gather to it all the loose material from the shores of the island, the currents on both the east and west shores being from the