

durability. All the best modern Canadian ships were built of this fine wood. Red pine was occasionally used for ceiling and planking, and yellow pine for decks. Canadian rock elm is a magnificent wood for the bottoms of ships, as it is always under water, and Lloyd's allowed it to be used in English ships of the 12 year grade. Experience has proved that ships built of tamarac, being more buoyant, were far better suited for heavy cargoes than oak-built ships. Some good tamarac ships have been found sound and tight, when twenty, thirty, and even forty years old. In 1852 there were twenty-five ship-building establishments at Quebec, and eight or ten floating docks.

In that year, a notable event in the history of the art occurred. "Lloyd's Registry" sent out to Quebec Mr. Thomas Menzies, a gentleman of high character and great ability, to act as special surveyor, and after his advent a marked improvement occurred in Quebec ships. Upon payment of a fee of 25 cents per ton, he specially surveyed a ship from the time her keel was laid until she was launched, and this entitled her to be marked in the Society's books as "built under special survey," and this gave her an enhanced value in the market.

The principal ship-builders in 1852 were Allan Gilmour & Co., W. G. Russell, John I. Nesbitt, Thomas C. Lee, G. H. Parke, T. H. Oliver, E. F. Jean Pierre Brunelle, Edouard Trahan, Wm. Cotnam, Baldwin & Dinning, P. Labbé, G. Lemelin, J. & J. Samson, J. E. Gingras, Pierre Valin, and Hippolite Dubord.

The business, however, was conducted in such a way that few of the actual builders made any money in the long run.

With the exception of Gilmours and Russell, they had no capital, and were entirely dependent on "fournisseurs," or capitalists, who advanced the necessary funds, charging heavy commissions, which, in ordinary times, ate up

all the profits, but sometimes left the capitalist not only minus his commissions, but part of his advances also.

The ordinary commissions were five per cent. on advances, with seven per cent. per annum interest; four per cent. on sale; two and a half per cent. for procuring freight; and two and a half per cent. for collecting it. Add to these the fact that the ships often lay several months in Liverpool for sale, and were then sold on four or six months' credit, and it will be seen that commissions and interest together often approached twenty per cent.,—enough to ruin any business.

Seeing this, the Government at last was induced to bring in a bill giving the advancer a prior lien on the ship as soon as her keel was laid. Parliament passed it, but it had no appreciable effect on the commissions charged.

When the writer first arrived at Quebec, in January, 1854, there was a boom in ship-building. Gold had been discovered in Australia, and a rush of emigrants from Great Britain followed, causing a heavy demand for large, fast, clipper sailing ships. Boston, St. John, N.B., and Quebec yards were full of orders for such ships. There were no steamships running to Australia in those days, and there was no Suez Canal. Such ships as were for sale in Liverpool were bought up at very high prices—as high as £12 stg. per ton being paid for uncoppered Quebec-built ships. Everyone that could raise or borrow money rushed into ship-building. The scene in the Quebec yards on a fine winter's day was then a very animated one. The songs of the French-Canadian shipwrights, when raising frames or carrying planks, the whirr of the saws, the blows of the mallets, and the vim of the men, all working with a will, were very pleasant to the eye or the ear of the onlooker.

Several of the ships then building were of 1,800 tons register. Some of the builders wisely sold their ships on the stocks at high prices. One, the