

HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS

AT

FOOT OF LACHINE CANAL.

MONTREAL, January 17, 1862.

To the Proprietors on Mill Street:

Gentlemen,—In accordance with instructions received from you, through Messrs. Gould, Grant and Hall, I have prepared plans and estimates for improvements in front of Mill Street, which are herewith submitted for your consideration.

In so far as my knowledge extends, of the various schemes heretofore suggested, for the extension of Harbor and Warehouse facilities in the Port of Montreal, the present one differs materially both with reference to the general plan, and the mode in which it is proposed to be carried into execution.

The plans for Hydraulic Docks, and a City Terminus for the Grand Trunk Railway, lately prepared under the instructions of a Provisional Committee, would if constructed answer every requirement of trade and manufactures for all time to come, be the increase what it might; the very magnitude of the entire scheme may, however, have the effect of postponing the commencement and completion to a period so far in the future, that it becomes a serious question, in view of the embarrassments the present trade of Montreal is labouring under, to determine if some modification cannot be made by which a part of the project may be brought into successful operation, leaving the balance to be developed as the requirements of commerce demand.

I need scarcely refer to the desirableness of a step being at once taken, with a view to obviate the difficulties under which the commercial community of this important sea port city have been for some time past labouring, for the want of proper facilities for transacting business—difficulties which will under the present order of things keep pace with the increase of trade, if they will not indeed surpass it, and thereby produce a retrograde movement, a condition of affairs so evident during the past season, as to have formed "the topic in every mouth"—and no doubt the subject of deep consideration on your part, as by none have those difficulties been more appreciated or better understood.

The McGill Street Terminus, although in one sense a component part of the entire

scheme before adverted to, was yet quite distinct from it, and capable of being carried out separately, being especially intended for the local business of the city, leaving the remaining portion, where was to be effected the immediate union of rail and water communication, for the accommodation of "the great through traffic." If the entire project were carried out simultaneously, as was intended, all would have been well, but on the contrary were only that section having reference to local business built, the trade although relieved to a certain extent would still labour under serious disadvantages.

The connection of the Railway at Point St. Charles, with McGill Street, was to be obtained by placing three lines of rails south of Mill street, or between it and the river St. Lawrence, raising the ground where necessary, to the height of twenty-five feet above summer level in the harbor, so as to be above any possible danger from ice, leaving a space for the escape of the tail race water from the various Mills, between the street so widened and elevated, and the embankment surrounding the Hydraulic Dock on the north side, of ninety feet opposite Grant, Hall and Company's Mill; from thence gradually increasing to two hundred and seventy feet at its junction with the harbor opposite the foot of the Lachine Canal. This arrangement was agreed to at the time by all the parties interested, although it appropriated space on the south side of Mill Street, owned by the various proprietors, and of the utmost importance to some of them in the successful carrying on of the business in which a large amount of capital had been embarked—those gentlemen waiving private interests and meeting the question of a great public improvement with a broad and liberal spirit in the highest degree commendable.

The uncertainty which attends the immediate carrying out of the entire scheme, now leads you to enquire whether it is not possible to engraft on the City Terminus portion of it, some of the peculiar advantages belonging to the Dock part