

and others, would be materially altered, or rendered useless, while, of course, no guarantee can be given that other equally satisfactory means of passing the Rapids will be afforded. While engineers may be able to estimate the probable volumes of water, and the possible or even probable direction and velocity of currents, experience alone will give certain results, or settle the questions of grave importance whether proposed new channels will be safely navigable for the vessels requiring to use them. It has been admitted that undertakings by power development companies to meet future emergencies, and to protect or indemnify navigation interests, should not be accepted, and that the protection should be applied before the development is permitted.

"We have a larger duty to perform than merely to protect the interests of the two companies above named; and their cases are cited merely as concrete examples sufficient in themselves to warrant refusal of sanction for the proposed works, without reference to the other dangers and difficulties entailed, such as the congestion of canals, the risk of accident to the works and the chance of blockades, not to mention the various other perils which can only be foreseen with reference to other cases where navigators are proved to have suffered by the positive evidence of increased insurance rates. We beg leave to refer to various previous memorials and petitions submitted to your commission, in which they have, through their individual bodies, declared themselves unalterably opposed to power developments on the St. Lawrence and other rivers which may in the present, or future, possibly interfere to any extent with any navigation interests; and we refer again to the well-defined policy already laid down by your commission that the interests referred to are to be considered paramount; we submit that it is abundantly apparent that these interests would be directly and definitely prejudiced and interfered with by the proposed works, and that the rights of navigators would also be rendered liable to the other indirect perils and difficulties referred to, and that, therefore, the plans submitted cannot properly be given the sanction for which the promoters ask. We therefore pray that the plans and proposals submitted be not sanctioned by your Commission."

Memorials were also presented by the Shipping Federation of Canada, Montreal Board of Trade and Montreal Chambre de Commerce, to the same effect. A meeting took place, Mar. 8, in Ottawa, when the deputation placed its views of the Long Sault Development Co.'s proposals before the Premier, the Ministers and Chief Engineers of the Railways and Canals, and Public Works Departments, and the Chief Engineer of the Marine Department, during which the plans were thoroughly discussed.

Shipping Federation of Canada.

The annual meeting was held in Montreal Feb. 10. In submitting the sixth annual report for the year 1908, Hugh A. Allan, President, said:

The season of navigation opened April 30 with the arrival of the s.s. Corsican, and the last ocean vessel to leave was the s.s. Dahomey, Nov. 26. The number of sea-going vessels that arrived during the season was 739, of a tonnage of 1,958,604 tons, compared with 742 vessels of a tonnage of 1,923,658, showing a decrease of 3 vessels and an increase of 34,946 tons. The passenger business eastbound shows an increase, which may be accounted for by the U.S. travelling public appreciating the natural advantages of the St. Lawrence in preference to other routes. The westbound traffic shows a considerable falling off. The number of cattle shipped in-

creased 2,565; the number of sheep shipped (which is the smallest since 1879) decreased 1,274. The apple shipments decreased 262,608 barrels; cheese decreased 169,480 boxes; eggs decreased 17,547 cases; lard decreased 13,077 packages; flour and meal decreased 127,408 barrels; lumber decreased 9,663,118 feet b.m.; butter increased 26,365 packages; box meats increased 13,439 boxes; pulp and paper increased 18,456 tons; hay increased 8,939 tons; grain and seeds decreased 1,482,207 bush. Time, however, works its own cure, and already there are signs of improvement and, as in past years any improvement in trade in the west always reflects itself on Montreal, we may probably look for a gradual betterment during the coming year.

There was a decrease in employment of longshoremen during the season, the daily average being 669, as compared with 786 in 1907. The season passed without any recurrence of labor troubles. The new bonus system is appreciated by the regular men who look to the wharves annually for their living, and has had the effect of retaining until the close of navigation the greater number of the men who signed the contract at the beginning of the season, thereby reducing the floating element which caused so much trouble by making unreasonable demands when the call for labor exceeded the supply.

The marine signal service stations that were opened in Oct., 1907, for reporting vessels and conveying to them the conditions of the river, have been found of great advantage. This was especially so during the unprecedented period of fog and bush fires which we passed through, enabling us to know the whereabouts of vessels that were delayed with passengers on board. Although the present system works well in clear weather, the executive committee consider it would still be of greater advantage if wireless communication could be set up between vessels and the shore in smoky or thick weather; this latter point is receiving the Minister's consideration. Another matter is the work done in connection with the dredging of the Beaujeu channel below Quebec; a 30 ft. channel with a width of 600 ft. has been opened during the season, enabling vessels drawing under 30 ft. to reach Quebec at any state of the tide. Dredging operations are being continued, and the intention is to extend the width of the channel to 1,000 ft. It is very gratifying to learn that a start has been made to deepen the St. Lawrence ship channel to 35 ft., and that good progress has been made with the deepening at Cap-à-la-Roche. I think it is only fair to mention the satisfactory condition in which the different aids to navigation have been kept during the season. From the record kept of reports and complaints from masters and pilots, the following figures show a very satisfactory condition for the season. In 1906, 52 defects were reported; in 1907 47, and in 1908, 17.

The question of the rental of the permanent sheds, and how best to reach the upper storeys, has been under consideration by the Montreal Harbor Commissioners. The executive committee consider that the charging of rentals for the permanent sheds is a very unwise step, and is not in accordance with the policy of making Montreal a free port, which policy was first adopted by the Government when it took over the Lake St. Peter debt, and has been continued since then by the reductions from time to time in the wharfage rates. While the committee admit that the erection of these sheds has been very beneficial to the trade of the port, they do not believe that the policy of making steamers of the regular lines trading to the port, whose bills of lading only call for delivery at

ships' rail, pay all the rental charges, while the merchants and receivers of freight, who benefit by the improved wharf accommodation, receive this benefit without cost to themselves. The executive committee does not ask for free sheds, but it considers that the new conditions call for a re-arrangement of these charges so that all parties benefiting shall pay a proportion of the benefits received. It was stated by the Chairman of the Harbor Commissioners at a meeting of the Manufacturers' Association, that \$30,000 has been saved in three months in the handling of freight on the wharves, and as the season of St. Lawrence navigation extends over seven months of the year, it is reasonable to suppose that the saving during the whole season will amount to about \$70,000. The executive committee therefore is of opinion that this saving should enable the Commissioners to reduce the charges of rentals to the regular lines, and thinks it well also to point out that a tramp steamer might come to the port and have her cargo handled without contributing a cent to shed rentals. In the committee's opinion the Harbor Commissioners should be asked to consider whether the system prevailing at Boston and Portland of covering the cost of shed accommodation by a charge on the goods cannot be adopted here. If this were done, the regular lines running to Montreal would be put on a par with the lines running to Boston and Portland, and therefore able to compete with them.

The Federation has protested for years against the sick mariners' dues of 2c. a ton, charged 3 times a year on every ship arriving in any of the provinces except Ontario. The monies collected from these dues form part of the Consolidated Fund of Canada, and a large surplus has accumulated. The Government introduced a bill during the last session reducing the dues from 2c. to 1½c. per ton. It is to be hoped that in the near future this unjust impost will be abolished altogether; the charge falls upon vessels which gain no advantage from the fund; besides, not being levied in Ontario, the tonnage from that province goes free both in home ports and in the U.S., an unfair discrimination against the other provinces.

The cordial relations that have existed between the Federation and the different Government departments have continued during the year, and to this I attribute largely the success of our work, and it gives me pleasure to testify to the assistance, co-operation and assiduity of the Minister of Marine, and the other officers of his department.

THE HARBOR COMMISSIONERS' REPLY.

The Montreal Harbor Commissioners replied to Mr. Allan in an interview in the Montreal Witness as follows: "Mr. Allan's remarks were somewhat misleading. Out of the total revenue for the port of Montreal, which amounts to about \$500,000, the shipping companies contributed last year \$29,500; the merchants, manufacturers and railway companies contributed the balance. The shed rental charge this year is only 3% on the actual cost, which is a very moderate rental, considering that these new magnificent steel sheds are the best of their kind, and have more than doubled the storage capacity in the central part of the harbor. The erection of these sheds has enabled the steamship companies using them to handle freight with very much greater despatch and at greatly reduced cost. The cargo of a steamer of one of the leading lines using this port on a voyage last season was loaded and unloaded, a total of 13,000 tons in 72 hrs., a time record which has not been surpassed by any of the modern ports in Europe. There has also been a saving to the steamship com-