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PREFACE

IT is doubtful if there are any of the Dominion's natural resources more valuable to our people or more essential to the national well-being than her great inland waterways, her deeply indented sea-coasts and her splendid geographical position, which latter gives her such a commanding position with regard to the ocean carrying trade.

There is no doubt that the most has not been made of Canada's great maritime advantages in the past, but the period of inaction in that respect appears to have passed, and pretty general attention is commanded by everything that pertains to the country's shipping interests. While the Canadian people are hopefully looking forward to a great future development of Canadian shipping and to a more thorough exploitation of the Dominion's water routes and her resources of sea and river foods, it is natural to suppose that a volume devoted to an account of those resources, and to an historical sketch of what has been done in the past to develop them, will be received with general interest.

As a matter of fact there is a certain historical glamour or romance connected with the story of Canadian shipping, which makes it interesting in itself.

Perhaps the chief practical value of this volume lies in the records of what the Canadian government has done and is now doing to develop the country's maritime interests.

Although the work of the Department of Marine and Fisheries excites a measure of general attention, it has received in the past much less public consideration than it has deserved.

In view of the paramount importance of the shipping interests of Canada, it is impossible to overstate the necessity of supplementing by aids to navigation the Dominion's exceptional natural facilities for the development of the marine transportation system.

With the recent extension of the scope of the department by the delegation to it of the work of deepening and maintaining the St. Lawrence Ship Channel and kindred works properly pertaining to the Marine and Fisheries Department, but hitherto in charge of the Public

Works and other departments, the Marine Department has, during the past year or two, been reorganized on a more comprehensive basis. The present time certainly appears opportune for the publication of a history of the work of the Department from its organization.

In this volume the chief public works undertaken by the Dominion Government to aid navigation, inland or sea-wise, are passed in review, and descriptions given of improvements to navigation accomplished and in contemplation.

Additions to existing aids to navigation now being introduced are so numerous and so important in character that when completed they will amount almost to a complete revolution in the service. More powerful lights are being installed in lightships and lighthouses, and more powerful foghorns in signal stations. Great lightships of powerful design and complicated equipment are already built, or are projected, to be stationed far out at sea, where a few years ago it was considered impossible for any vessel to ride at anchor. With the installation of automatic gas buoys, a submarine signal system and wireless telegraph, it seems as if even witchcraft itself were destined to be enlisted in the work of making easier and safer the navigation of Canadian waters.

For assistance in the preparations of this volume the writer is indebted to the Hon. J. Raymond Prefontaine, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, for his kindly interest, and the instructions given to his officials which resulted in the obtaining of a great deal of valuable departmental information. And to the officials of the department, particularly to Lieut.-Col. Gourdeau, the Deputy Minister, to Commander Spain, R.N., Mr. J. F. Fraser, Commissioner of Lights, and to Mr. Wm. Stumbles, thanks are due and gratefully tendered.

The writer must also express a lively sense of his obligations to Dr. A. G. Doughty, C.M.G., Dominion Archivist, and his staff, and to Messrs. Sylvain, Bouchette and McCormick, of the Parliamentary Library, for assistance rendered.

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