

port of Montreal and the St. Lawrence route generally have suffered serious loss, evidence of same being in possession of your Petitioners in the shape of tables of insurance rates and letters from shipowners withdrawing their ships from that route ;

That said discrimination against the St. Lawrence route is most severe, the insurance rates on cargo from the opening of navigation to the end of August ranging from double to treble the rates charged for cargo on vessels at Atlantic ports, while from September 15th to the close of navigation the discrimination is still more accentuated, the St. Lawrence rates then being from five to seven times greater than to ports on the Atlantic coast ;

That this system of heavy advances during the fall months which originated in the days of sailing vessels is, now that the trade is performed entirely by steamers, a most unwarrantable feature of the insurance companies' tariff ;

That the rates on hulls also discriminate in favor of Atlantic ports, and that, although such discrimination is less than on cargoes, it is perhaps even more responsible for the diverting of ships from the St. Lawrence route ;

That, in the opinion of the mercantile community, these high rates of insurance to and from the St. Lawrence on both hulls and cargo will, if continued, be fatal to the marine commerce of the great Canadian waterway ;

That, although many improvements have been made in the aids to navigation of the St. Lawrence, such as channel deepening and widening, additional lights, buoys, etc., no reduction of the insurance rates has thereby been secured, but, on the contrary, such rates have within the past two years been enormously increased ;

Wherefore your Petitioners humbly pray that, in view of the vital commercial interests at stake, Your Excellency in Council may be pleased to appoint a Royal Commission for the purpose of investigating the question of the marine insurance rates charged on hulls and cargo using the St. Lawrence route, with a view to procuring more equitable rates, so that our national waterway may be enabled to regain and retain its share of the shipping trade of this continent,

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c., &c.

Signed on behalf of the Council of the Montreal Board of Trade.	}	ROBERT MACKAY, <i>President.</i> GEO. HADRILL, <i>Secretary.</i>
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MONTREAL, 25th October, 1900.

Immediately the Council's decision to petition the Government became public, the Underwriters' Association intimated that the information asked for by the Council in May was approaching completion, and subsequently asked that a deputation from that Association should be heard whenever the subject was again up for discussion. Your Council decided, however, that, as action in the matter had been delayed from May until October, the petition should go forward without the further delay which the meeting with the Underwriters would involve.

It is gratifying to note that the Canadian Manufacturers' Association of Toronto volunteered its assistance in any effort made by this Board to secure a reduction of the marine insurance rates on the St. Lawrence route, and it unanimously endorsed this Board's petition by a letter to the Secretary of State, on the ground that it felt very strongly that anything that militates against the success of the shipping trade by Canadian ports must act injuriously to the best interests of this country.