

Many years ago it was found necessary, in the interests of shipping trading between this continent and Europe, to establish a light at Cape Race, a dangerous point on the southern shores of Newfoundland, but as this light was required principally for shipping which did not enter any of the ports of Newfoundland, the British Government did not consider it advisable to ask the Government of that colony to erect and maintain such an expensive light, as Newfoundland had not the means of collecting the necessary dues from passing vessels using the light, which would be required for its construction and maintenance. The British Government therefore established a light, and subsequently, at the request of Canada, it also placed a powerful steam fog-whistle in connection with the light, both of which have proved exceedingly useful to shipping passing in that neighborhood. The annual cost of maintaining this light and fog signal is £1,400 sterling per annum. In order to reimburse the British Treasury for this outlay, a small tonnage duty of one-twelfth of a penny sterling per ton, afterwards increased to one-eighth of a penny per ton, when the fog-whistle was established, was imposed on all vessels arriving in the United Kingdom from ports in North America, north of New York and including that port, and on vessels clearing from the United Kingdom for these ports, and with reference to vessels which entered and cleared in Canada from or to ports in Europe not in the United Kingdom, and from which the British authorities could not collect dues, Canada was required by the British Government to collect the prescribed tonnage dues and remit them to the Imperial Treasury. By doing so, however, the Canadian Government considered it would be an infringement of the principle of free lights which had been adopted in Canada, and decided to pay the dues out of the Canadian Treasury rather than collect them from the vessels. Under this arrangement, therefore, we find this strange anomaly of a foreign vessel coming to Canada for a cargo from a foreign port in Europe, and returning to a similar port with the cargo, not only using all the Canadian lights, seen during her voyage, free of charge, but the Canadian Government pays to the Imperial Treasury the dues chargeable for the maintenance of the light and fog-signal at Cape Race on account of that vessel.

Our system of free lights is not only considered to be most necessary by the commercial interests of Montreal, but for some time past the representatives of these interests have been urging the Government to abolish the canal dues, as was done recently by the State Legislature of New York, with reference to the Erie Canal, and the Government has so far yielded to these representations as to reduce the dues one-half during the present season, but the merchants and shippers of Montreal are still anxious to have the canals made entirely free, with the view of enabling the St. Lawrence route to compete successfully with the New York route, for the carrying trade of the west.

Another peculiarity of our lighthouse system may be here noticed, which differs somewhat from the systems of other countries. Our geographical position is such, that it has compelled Canada, in