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**APPENDIX L.**


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**REPORT OF THE SHIPPING MASTER FOR THE PORT OF QUEBEC IN  
RELATION TO THE YEAR COMMENCING 1st JULY, 1868, AND  
TERMINATING, 30th JUNE, 1869.**

The branch of the public service in which I am employed, is one of much importance to the commercial interests of the Dominion, and equally so to those of the British ship owner. The duties of shipping office are multifarious, as the British Shipping Act sufficiently attests, being in itself a volume—and the Provincial Act (10th and 11th, Victoria Cap. 25) under which the shipping office was originally inaugurated, (and which was compressed, but little altered by the consolidation of the statutes) is in many points so defective, as to argument the difficulty of performing these duties quite as much as it helps them. Not only is the language of the Act, in some instances, that of permission, instead of that of enactment, but some of the sections admit of a construction which makes them contradictory one of another. Discrepancies in the source on which should repose the confidence of a public officer, and from which alone he can derive any authority, render the due performance of his duties extremely difficult, for, although he may himself feel confident of the intention of the law, every person with whom his official duty brings him in contact, is sure to insist on such perusal of the text as shall make it most conformable to his own particular interest.

A new era has dawned upon the shipping office since the confederation of the North American Provinces, and the Shipping Act for the Dominion, now in preparation, will probably remove the difficulties which have hitherto encumbered its operations.

Out of the ships which resorted to the Port of Quebec, during the year now under report, the number transacting business with the shipping office was two hundred and seventeen, and which classed as follows, viz:—

British Ships . . . . .	141
Colonial do . . . . .	76
Foreign . . . . .	
	217

It is probable that the fees on the shipping of seamen, imposed by the 10th and 11th Victoria, Chapter 25, and continued under the Consolidated Statutes of Canada, were not so imposed as a source of revenue, but rather with a view to check any prejudicial drain upon the sparse population of the country, which might be attempted under the pretext of engaging them as seamen. It is true that the pecuniary obligation involved is but of small amount, but the necessity enjoined by the law of bringing every man so engaged before a public officer, by him to be shipped according to the prescribed form, brings also into a public office those immediately connected with the transaction, and subjects them to notice and recognition—But, whatever may have been the intention of the Government, the fees collected in the shipping office did considerably contribute towards its own maintenance, until the decrease of ship building, joined to the diminished trade of the Port, and a vigilant opposition to the crimps, combined to curtail their amount. For instance, in the year 1860, I was enabled to remit to the Receiver General nine hundred dollars, in the year 1861, eight hundred and sixty dollars in the year 1862, eight hundred and twenty-six dollars, in the year 1863, six hundred and fifty three dollars. Since that period, the receipts have gradually diminished, until from two thousand and sixty-two dollars, the sum received in 1863, they amounted in 1868 to only nine hundred and ninety-eight dollars, making it impossible in that year, to pay the Deputy Shipping Master more than one half of his accustomed salary.