

IMPROVEMENT OF HARBORS.

Under the Act 32 & 33 Vict. cap. 40, and Orders in Council issued under the authority of that Act, there is a tonnage duty of ten cents per ton levied on vessels entering the harbors of Bathurst and Richibucto, in New Brunswick, and Amherst and House Harbor in the Magdalen Islands. This tonnage duty is only chargeable on vessels of 100 tons or under, once in each calendar year, and if over that size, twice in each calendar year. The 4th section of the Act alluded to requires the Minister of Marine and Fisheries to make a report and statement of the sums collected at each port, and those appropriated and expended, (if any,) for improvements thereat, during each fiscal year, for the purpose of being laid before Parliament.

The amount collected at the ports referred to on account of this service for the year ended 30th June, 1871, was as follows :

			\$	cts.
Bathurst	47	vessels.	7,034	703 40.
Richibucto	95	„	23,946	2,394 60.
House Harbor	23	„	840	84 00.
Amherst	87	„	3,899	389 90.
Total amount collected				<u>\$3,571 90.</u>

The amount collected during the previous fiscal year was \$3,524 60.

The total expenditure for harbor improvements under this Act for the last fiscal year was \$5,750 87, as will appear by the report of the Minister of Public Works, while the receipts were \$3,571 90, but as \$2,000 of the expenditure was for services performed during the previous year, the real expenditure for last fiscal year was only \$3,750.

The total expenditure under this Act for the two last fiscal years was \$6,350 87, while the total receipts for the same period were \$7,096 50, shewing an excess of receipts over expenditure, since the operation of the Act. As soon as the steam dredge arrives, however, which I learn from the Department of Public Works, may shortly be expected from the Clyde, the work of improvement in these harbors may be expected to be progressed with, and if its operations are successful, as I believe they will be, the benefits to be derived by the shipping frequenting these ports must be very considerable, and well worth the amount contributed by those for whose benefit the improvements have been made and the tax imposed.

The improvements now being carried out at other harbors in the Dominion, the expenses of which are defrayed by the Dominion Government out of the Public Treasury, without the imposition of a special tonnage duty, as in the case of the four harbors herein mentioned, are not alluded to in this report, as they are carried on by the Department of Public Works, and an account of them will be found in the report of that Department.]

In cases where the improvements of harbors were important to the general interests of navigation ; such as the construction of harbors of refuge at certain points on our coasts, where it was considered advisable to have them for the safety of life and property,