

feet draught or 50,000 bushels capacity, will prove to be the most convenient and profitable size.

The objection to a barge system, alone, is that on such a route it must be necessarily a monopoly. The Erie Canal has a tow-path and individual boat-owners can travel it as a highway—so had the Welland in the days of horse-power towage—but the lake and river navigation of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa and Rideau routes, require tug boats. Such a monopoly as existed upon the military and inland route, when there was no other (and no railways) can only exist upon the St. Lawrence as long as it is the interest of the lake vessels to continue it. The lake vessels have outgrown our canals so that lighterage is necessary, and may be increased to the extent of half the cargo, and then it will be seen whether they will, for the St. Lawrence Canals, lighten the whole as at present, a portion only as on the Welland, or none.

Montreal has an exceptional harbour in that its wharfs are under water from December until April, the result of a winter rise caused by the packing of ice below the city. The current of the St. Lawrence meets the tide in Lake St. Peter (although salt water does not come within a hundred miles of it) and the descending ice is first checked there. It then backs up and accumulates so as to raise the harbour 10 to 15 feet above summer level. In settling into its winter bed, and in arousing from it in the spring, the ice shoves landward with such force as to prevent the erection of warehouses at the wharf front. Ocean steamers are loaded at their berths with grain afloat in the harbour, transferred by floating elevators, and it is therefore contended that, for Montreal, and for so long as the present system continues, barges, as floating warehouses, are the most convenient and economical.

Extensive harbour improvements are now in progress, including the elevation of the wharfs and the construction of a guard wall to protect them (and warehouses upon them) from the ice shoves. These improvements will give over four miles front of deep water wharfage, nine-tenths of which will be 25