

# THE LIGHTHOUSE SYSTEM OF CANADA,

BY

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Under the system at present in operation in Canada, no light dues are exacted from any vessels, British or foreign, visiting Canadian ports; and the cost of maintaining our lighthouses, instead of being a tax on the shipping, which derive advantage from the lights, as is the case in the United Kingdom and some other countries, is a direct charge on the general revenue of the country, and is required to be provided for annually by a vote of Parliament. During last fiscal year ending 30th June, 1884, the total cost of maintaining our lighthouses, lightships, steam fog-signals, automatic buoys, bell buoys, ordinary buoys and beacons, including salaries, lighting apparatus, repairs, petroleum oil and all other materials necessary to keep them in an efficient state, was \$456,120, and the cost of the four steamers attending on the lighthouses was \$85,177, making altogether \$541,297. The cost of construction of new lights is not included in the figures above mentioned. It might naturally be asked, why is this system of free lights, which exempts the ships trading to our ports, many of them owned by English shipowners and foreigners, who have no interest in Canada beyond the legitimate one of seeking employment for their vessels in our carrying trade, preferred to the English system, which requires all vessels—British as well as foreign—to contribute their fair share of the cost of maintaining those lights on the coast, which are so essentially necessary to warn them of danger, and to guide them safely to their ports of destination? The answer is easily furnished, and it is this: Canada is deeply interested in securing as large a share as possible of the carrying trade of grain and other products of the west, from this continent to Europe; and in competing with the port of New York and other ports in the United States, for that trade, it is of the utmost importance that all dues and charges on shipping coming to the St. Lawrence, should be reduced to the lowest possible limit, as the freight to be transported naturally finds its way by the cheapest route. If the taxpayer of Canada, therefore, defrays the cost of maintaining the lights on our coasts, instead of requiring the shipowners to maintain them, it is with the view of reducing charges on shipping to a minimum rate, and thereby cheapen the cost of transportation by the St. Lawrence route, and thus secure a fair share of the carrying trade of the west. The competition for this trade is so keen that a difference