

fact. We must realize that up to the present time, for one reason or another, Montreal has not met the demands made upon it; and the result has been that Montreal has not been our national port, but that Portland, Boston, and New York have been our national ports " ***

" It is idle to shut our eyes to these facts. Then, the conditions are such that you cannot get to that city vessels such as you should have if you mean to compete with Portland, Boston and New York.

Now, I am not going to give my own opinion on that subject; I am going to give to the House the opinion of Mr. Reford, one of the most prominent steamship men in Montreal, and one who has been identified with the steamship business there for many years. What do we find Mr. Reford saying in a letter written to the *Globe* of the 23rd of March last? He says: "

" At many points between Montreal and Quebec, and these the most dangerous ones " where the current is strongest, the ship channel is only 300 feet wide, with a so-called " depth of twenty-seven feet, which, however, is not at times to be depended upon owing " to boulders and other impediments in the channel. The current on almost the entire " route between Montreal and Quebec is swift, at places exceedingly tortuous, and a " steamer sailing from Montreal with a full cargo is in constant danger, owing to her " inability to anchor at any of the narrow parts of the river should she meet fog, stern or " snow, or any accident occur to her machinery, because she can only anchor safely from " her bow, and not having room to swing with the current, would certainly go ashore, " and if more than 300 feet in length could completely block the channel for, it may be, " an unknown period. It might, indeed, occur that the only way to get rid of such an " obstruction with a vessel, say 500 feet long, might be the blowing up of the vessel."

" Therefore you have to realize that leading to Montreal you have a channel that is not quite 27 feet deep, and that does not exceed 300 feet in width. I do not say that the people of this country may not be willing to make a channel enabling a vessel drawing 30 feet to go to Montreal—not only to dredge out the channel, but to widen and straighten it; but if the people of this country are prepared to do that, let them realize beforehand what it means. Realize that if you are going to dig a channel between Quebec and Montreal, it must accommodate vessels which, if you are to compete with New York and Boston, will draw 33 feet of water. In winter, for instance, you have your goods at Montreal; what will you do with them? You cannot keep them there; you must get them out of Montreal to the market in Europe. How are you going to reach that market? "

Many interesting speeches were made *pro* and *con*, but the whole debate boiled down might be put in a nutshell as follows: