

The Free Port Question

THE EXPERIENCE OF HAMBURG.—FREE PORT QUESTION BROUGHT UP IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—MARSEILLES TO BE A FREE PORT IN DIRECT COMPETITION WITH HAMBURG.

(From the "South Shore Press,"
Friday, May 26, 1916)

On April 28th, the South Shore Press published an editorial article urging the establishment of a Free Port on the South Shore of the St. Lawrence, opposite Montreal, extending from St. Lambert down to Longueuil. The article has aroused considerable interest on both sides of the river, and has evoked much comment favorable to the proposition.

Of course, the launching of a new idea of this kind is not unattended with difficulties, and the first difficulty to overcome is the task of disabusing the public mind of the very general misconception as to what a Free Port really is. That the public mind should be obsessed by a wrong idea upon the subject is not surprising; because, in the first place, we have not a single Free Port on this continent; and in the second place, our public men, who ought to know better, have in their invincible ignorance, assiduously cultivated an erroneous idea upon the subject.

To people in Europe and of course including Great Britain, there is nothing strange about the idea of a Free Port. In the United Kingdom, all the ports are practically free ports: Flume, Trieste, Ostend, Copenhagen,

Marseilles, Dunkirk, Bremen, Hamburg, Lubeck, Brake, Cuxhaven, Emden, Geestemunde, Nonfahrvasser, Stettin, Ancona, Leghorn, Messina, Senegalla, Genoa, in Italy; Braila, Galatz, Kustengi and Sulina in Roumania; Archangel and Kola in Russia; a number of the French and English West Indies, Malacca, Penang, and Singapore, Hong Kong, Weihaiwei, Aden, Gibraltar, St. Helena, and St. Thomas, Macao and Livingston in Guatelmala, have all had their free ports. Many of them still remain free; others, through wars, annexations, local rivalries and political considerations, have lost their freedom.

The people of any of these towns would be amused to hear a Canadian politician's definition of a Free Port as a port free from shipping dues, harbor dues or dock charges.

A Free Port is a port that is free from Customs duties.

The greatest Free Port in the world, in a protected country, is Hamburg, the third greatest port in the world, being exceeded only by London and Liverpool, which, of course, are equally free from customs duties. But any man who is under the delusion that because Hamburg is a Free Port it is free from shipping dues, or dock charges, let him try to run a cargo