

The Port and the Harbor of Montreal

A CHAPTER OF DEFINITIONS.—THE PORT IS THE HARBOR AND THE HARBOR IS THE PORT, BUT THE TWO ARE NOT ONE.—UNDER ABSOLUTE SEPARATE JURISDICTION AND CONTROL.

In common usage the terms, "Port of Montreal" and "Harbor of Montreal" are regarded as practically synonymous or at least convertible. As a matter of fact they are absolutely distinct and separate. The Port of Montreal is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Marine and Fisheries; the Harbor of Montreal is under the jurisdiction and control of the Harbor Commissioners. The confusion in the public mind may have arisen from the fact that both terms are applied by those of us who make any distinction in a sense different to that of ordinary usage elsewhere.

The "Encyclopedia Britannica" thus defines Commercial Harbor: "Commercial Harbors have to be provided for the formation of ports within their shelter on important trade routes, or for the protection of the approaches from the sea, of ports near the sea-coast, or maritime waterways running inland, in some cases at points on the coast devoid of all natural shelter."

The same excellent authority defines a "Port" as a place to which ships may resort for the unloading or taking in of cargo, or for shelter; a harbor, also a town possessing such a harbor, a seaport or seaport town, especially one where custom house officers are stationed." The alternative

use of the words "harbor" and "port" and the fact that "port" is derived from the Latin "portus" harbor; help to explain the confusion in the public mind and usage.

Clearly, however, a port, properly speaking, is a place within a harbor, for the use of ships in loading and unloading. The usage in Montreal with the sanction of law is precisely the contrary; a harbor is a place within a port with facilities for loading and unloading ships.

Section 5 of the Montreal Harbor Commissioners' Act of 1894, as amended in 1909, reads:

"Port of Montreal Defined

"5. The port of Montreal shall be held to comprise all that part of the river St. Lawrence which extends from the basin of Portneuf, exclusively, in the county of Portneuf, to a line bearing N. 65° E. astronomically from the easterly end of the division line between the lots known respectively as numbers 32266 and 3267 of the Official Plan and Book of Reference of the Parish of Montreal, to the east shore of the river St. Lawrence, and shall include such parts of the tributaries falling into the said part of the river St. Lawrence as are navigable for sea going vessels; but shall not include the harbor of Montreal, as defined by section 6 of this Act.