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Saint John's All Year Port

By R. E. ARMSTRONG

FOLLOWING is the first of two articles from the pen of R. E. Armstrong on the Port of Saint John and the Port of St. Andrews. Today's deal with Saint John and will be found of interest as recalling the history of the port, telling of the early days of sailing vessels and the advent of the steamship and dealing with the matter of port equipment. The story of St. Andrews will be published tomorrow. Of Saint John he writes:—

New Brunswick — the largest province in the Maritimes—can boast of being the possessor of two healthy ocean ports that are constantly open. The Port of Saint John occupies a central position on the northern coast of the Bay of Fundy. On Saint John's Day, 1804, Admiral Champlain (whose statue occupies a central place in Queen's Square), who was seeking for his French home sections for his French people, was so pleased with the appearance and opportunities of this ocean port area that he christened it River Saint John. That name was clung to until 1783, when Loyalist refugees from the neighboring republic came hitherward. When the city was founded the following year the name "Saint John" was continued to both the river and port.

PRESENTED TO CITY.

The Imperial Government honored its loyal refugees by presenting the entire harbor area to the city, since which time it remains under civic control. In this respect it differs from all other Canadian ports.

In its early days, vigorous ship-building construction was carried on both within the city and in adjacent localities. Throughout summer and winter, these splendid sailing ships traversed the entire world and established a record for the Eastern Canada that the Motherland was proud of. One of the world's finest clipper ships was the celebrated Marco Polo, a Saint John built ship, which broke the world's sailing record between Great Britain and Australia. There were thousands of other ships, barks, barkentines, brigantines and schooners that were constructed in this New Brunswick section and that won splendid records.

FIRST STEAMSHIP HERE.

In the early 80's it was gradually impressed on shipbuilders and ship-owners that the life of the sailing ship would soon be at an end, and steel and iron were taking the place of wood in hull construction, and steam engines were doing the work of the canvas sails. I recall when the Troop & Son Company, one of the most energetic and wealthy of Saint John's ship-owners, decided to add the first steamship to their craft. She was constructed overseas and was brought to Saint John for her first cargo. A loyal welcome was extended her by the people of the city, and when she sailed with a timber cargo a few weeks later, Capt. Fritz being in command, she was accompanied outside Partridge Island by a large group of citizens. Unfortunately on her return trip she was driven ashore on the Cape Breton coast and was totally wrecked. Capt. Fritz and many others on board were drowned. It was a heart-breaking experience and proved a source of agony not only to the owners but to many others within the city.

Some years later the William Thompson Co., another active shipping organization, founded the Battle Line of steamers and was doing an extensive traffic when the world war broke out. Two of these steamers were in a German port at the time and were seized upon by the German government. Within the last few weeks the announcement has been made that the German government will repay the Thompson Co. by contributing \$1,250,000 for the release of their ships. This announcement should be a source of satisfaction to the company's survivors.

CANADIAN PACIFIC.

While the withdrawal of sailing craft traffic by the steamship line was greatly mourned by the citizens of Saint John, a progressive spirit was aroused in 1889, when the Canadian Pacific Railway Company completed its transcontinental system between Vancouver and this eastern ocean port. A strong determination was aroused within the people of Saint John to have the Port of Saint John—Britain's ocean gateway into Canada—utilized for Canada's traffic instead of a certain Maine port, which was being maintained by subsidies from the Canadian government. For six years these demands were persistently made, while the City of Saint John was endeavoring to furnish a pierage system for itself on the West Side at its own expense.

The purchase by the City of the Carleton Branch Railway from the government of Canada for \$40,000 and the presentation of this branch line to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company awakened an active feeling on the part of this progressive railway body. A grain elevator was supplied by the Canadian Pacific Company and various other forms of equipment faced upon.

Finally, between 1895 and 1896 the government decided to coincide with Saint John's demands. The promotion of this situation apparently aroused a sympathetic feeling on the part of Canada. Shortly after 1899 the subsidies that were being paid to the marine steamship lines were cancelled.

USE OUR OWN PORTS.

Gradually, it was impressed upon practically all Canada that the Port of Saint John, which had contributed so much to Confederation, was acting within its rights and that it was entitled to carry on the freight traffic of the Dominion, particularly in the winter season when the St. Lawrence ports of Montreal and Quebec were closed by ice. While the Port of Saint John—which never suffers from ice trouble—is still affected in a degree by the rivalry of this Maine port, due to the utilization of the Grand Trunk or Canadian National Ry. system between Montreal and Portland, yet from the Atlantic to the Pacific the view has been strongly expressed that Canada's freight should be forwarded through her own ports, in preference to foreign ports. This is still Canada's predominant feeling.

TRI-PARTITE AGREEMENT.

The fact that the City of Saint John was given the control of the port by the Imperial Government and that in a measure it was out of the control of Canada's government, tended for a time to make it somewhat difficult to receive governmental financial assistance, such as was being extended to Montreal and other Canadian ports, but between 1910 and 1911 the gov-

ernment decided to come to Saint John's aid and in the latter year a tri-partite agreement was entered into by the Government, the City and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the special objects of which were for the Government to enter upon pier construction on the West Side, for the city to provide additional land, and water and sewerage development, and for the railway company to assist in the expansion of the trackage system in front of the piers and also to help in the filling up of adjacent land areas.

PORT EQUIPMENT

The present equipment of the port consists of the above, also 12 ocean piers, seven of which are on the west side and five on the east, two C. P. R. grain elevators, a series of shipping warehouses, coal and oil bunking plants, a cold storage plant, Partridge Island hospital and an immigration depot have been very helpful to the port.

by wireless direction-finding plants within the Bay of Fundy and by various other aids to navigation that marine casualties have been practically eliminated. This helpful situation has led to the recommendation from the Imperial Shipping Committee that the marine insurance discrimination against this port be removed and that it be placed on the same basis as Boston, Portland and Halifax.

The port is being utilized quite actively throughout the winter by steamship companies connected with the United Kingdom, Europe, South Africa, Australia, the West Indies, Cuba and South America. In the summer season it has connections with Manchester, Eng., the West Indies, Cuba, Canadian lake ports and Boston.

On the whole, the Port of Saint John has become one of Canada's most efficient ports, although it is still affected by the rivalry of certain U. S. ports that are connected with the Canadian National Railway.

HOME FROM CAPITAL.

C. F. Inches, K. C., returned to the city last evening from Fredericton, where he had been in attendance as a member of the council of the New Brunswick Baristers' Society at the investigation by the council of the charges of unprofessional conduct preferred against R. B. Hanson, K. C., M. P., of Fredericton.

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TELL YOUR FRIENDS

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\$1.65

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\$1.25

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