West Indies is somewhat brisk just now, owing largely we think, to Cuban and Porto Rican markets being closed, which forces agricultural products to other West India Islands, as well as fish." But that from Halifax, of date 11th inst., says: "whatever other effect it [the war] may have, it is going to be unquestionably hard on our export trade to the Spanish West Indies, which it already disturbs. It is also troubling the export lumber trade, coastwise."

We notice further that, in a three-page review, entitled "The Probable Effect of War," the Maritime Merchant has been sounding the merchants of Halifax on the subject, and gives the replies of a number. One man points out that while commercially the farmers, manufacturers and shipowners are reaping large benefits from advance in prices and freights, our West India and fishing business is suffering considerable loss through the closing of the large consuming markets of Cuba and Porto Rico. The average import of 3,000 hogsheads of sugar from Porto Rico is this year reduced to 400; and the import of molasses from 6,000 puncheons to 2,400. Porto Rico is a large consumer of dry fish. "The average shipments from Halifax alone are about 60,000 quintals dry fish and 6,000 bbls. pickled fish annually, with a larger additional quantity from Lunenburg and other outports, besides which a large quantity of lumber, potatoes, etc., is also shipped." Five-sixths of the codfish trade of Lunenburg, it is said, is with Porto Rico, and Lunenburg has a bank fleet of some 200 sail.

Next as to lumber. The American market for Maritime Province lumber is demoralized by the war. The industrial conditions in the New England States are unsettled, building operations are largely delayed or suspended, while freights and insurance have advanced. While this state of things may be only temporary, it must be reckoned with at the moment. Then the lumber trade with England is also dull, because old country stocks are heavy, and transatlantic freights have gone up with a bound.

Shipping is affected curiously. While the small sailing craft, or many of them, find their occupation meanwhile gone by reason of what has been said above, larger steamers are in demand at good freights. Mr. Black, of the shipping firm Pickford & Black, considers that some extra trade is almost certain to come to Canada, "and if the war should continue beyond a year Canada will no doubt benefit largely, especially in an increased demand for agricultural products and some lines of manufactured goods. All the sailing tonnage flying the American flag has been withdrawn from this trade, consequently a brisk demand exists for Canadian vessels at higher prices." Meantime, he adds, West India freights are higher, though they have not advanced nearly in the same ratio as European freights.

While, therefore, all is not gloomy in the anticipated effects of the war, in our Atlantic provinces, the outlook is distinctly unfavorable in some important directions. There are signs that the tourist travel from the States to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island, will this year be larger than usual. There is certain to be less transatlantic travel by reason of the war; and another factor which Mr. Chipman notices as likely to increase the traffic in this direction, is the fear of a bombardment of the seaside resorts between Baltimore and Eastport by the Spanish fleet, "I am told that there will be thousands of summer cottages along the coast line remain vacant during the entire season unless hostilities cease."

Late advices from Naples state that the cost of making macaroni has greatly increased, owing to the large advance in wheat. Some of the makers, it was reported, had withdrawn from the market.

MONTREAL HARBOR.

In the annual report of the Harbor Commissioners of Montreal for 1897, stress is laid upon two points; one the urgent necessity of increased accommodation, the other the memorial to Government, submitted under date 24th March last, asking state aid for the harbor as a national work. The sum required for the proposed improvements will increase the debt of the Harbor Commission to the total amount of $6,500,000. On this total debt the Commission propose to pay interest at the rate of two and a half per cent. per annum, making the annual payment of interest $162,500. This is the utmost sum that body feels justified in imposing as a tax on the import and export trade of the port. All that it requires of the Government is that the Government take over the payment of the interest on the present debt of the Commission.

The statement of the president refers to the Plan No. 6 for harbor improvement, endorsed by all the commercial bodies of the city, but rejected by the authorities at Ottawa. Also to the subsequent Plan 12A, which the commission forwarded for the approval of the Minister of Public Works, on the understanding: "That no portion of the cost of carrying out the said Plan will be borne by the Harbor Commissioners; that is, that the cost be borne by the Government, and that the Plan be on the high level." Although no formal approval has yet been given of the said Plan, No. 12A, there is good reason to believe, says Mr. Mackay, that it is acceptable to the Government. Since we received the president's statement, the Minister of Public Works has, we are glad to see, given in the House of Commons, on Tuesday, some definite information that makes Montreal people hopeful, though it is not as definite as one could wish. It is well known that Mr. Tarte has long and obstinately clung to the Hochelaga scheme of developing Montreal Harbor eastward, and antagonized the commercial bodies by so doing. Now he states, in answer to an enquiry by Mr Monk, that "the differences of opinion as to the plans to be adopted have been settled: we have agreed as to the plans to be carried out," which is so far so good, but he could not, or at least did not, say anything as to the policy of the Government about the memorial. He further said, replying to Mr. Bergeron, that the Hochelaga scheme lies over. "The works under the plans agreed to will be carried out in the centre of the city, leaving the other works in abeyance." This, at any rate, is something.

The revenue of the harbor of Montreal during the season of 1897 was $255,416, which is almost the same as it was in 1896. Cost of maintenance and management was $81,463, apart from capital expenditure, and the interest was $140,738, showing a surplus, as between revenue and ordinary expenditure, of $33,319. There was expended on capital account $156,751, which included Windmill Point basin and wharf, the guard pier, additional railway sidings, also wharves and dredging. The sum of $90,000 was received by way of Government loan, and the total bonded debt is $3,412,000, the average rate of interest on which is 4 1-5 per cent.

The year was a busy one, in the exports especially. The harbor master's returns show 796 sea-going vessels during the season, with a total tonnage of 1,379,002 tons, being 87 more vessels of 162,534 tons more than in 1896. The tonnage of the inland vessels was 1,134,346 tons, being an increase of 130,229 tons over the previous year. Particulars of imports and exports are given, which we here condense and compare with those of the previous navigable season: