

THE HARBOUR OF MONTREAL.

Her Majesty's marines and blue-jackets are always welcomed by the citizens of the Canadian metropolis, and Admiral Bedford and the marines and blue-jackets manning the ships now bound for Montreal will find our people ready to receive them with all the warmth and hospitality extended to the navy in former years. About a year ago, the Minister of Public Works stated at a dinner tendered to the captains and officers of H.M.S. "Talbot" and "Pallas" that Admiral Fisher would, on a certain day and at a fixed hour, cast his flagship's anchor in the port of Montreal. However, admirals and full-fledged captains are always slaves to duty, and Admiral Fisher with his ship has sailed away. The post-prandial promise of Mr. Tarte was not regarded seriously by those who knew aught of the draught and value of the Renown and the depth of the channel in the river St. Lawrence; but, even if we cannot, at present, expect the flagship of the North American squadron to visit Montreal, we may reasonably hope that the projected improvement to our channel will make the coming of an admiral's flagship possible in due course.

In this connection, we are led to think of the recent contribution of the Dominion Government to the improvement of the port. As the nominees of the Government, the Harbour Board will have the control of the expenditure. But those who recall how the port of Montreal has been built up by the exertions of our merchants, and who realize that, of necessity, such men are the best judges of the requirements of the situation, are very rightly confident that no political bias and no question of party expediency will be permitted to outweigh for one moment the true interests of the national port of the Dominion. Those who have wandered along the wharves of Montreal during the present summer, and have noted the signs of business activity apparent everywhere, must surely realize that a golden opportunity to improve the advantages we possess ought not to be improvement to the channel will make the coming of policy of false economy.

SUBSIDIES TO RAILWAYS UNDER CHANGED CONDITIONS.

The Government has decided to grant \$6,540,000 in subsidies to a number of new railway projects, or extensions to existing ones. Of this sum, \$1,647,000 consists of items which are only re-votes. Before leaving the House of Commons for this Session, Sir Charles Tupper, Leader of the Opposition, gave a general assent to these subsidies, and expressed his approval of the policy of Government aid being granted to railway enterprises. Sir Charles, although a vehement fighter, does not believe that the duty of the Opposition is to oppose whatever the Government proposes. He is high minded enough to judge questions on their merits, and shrewd enough to avoid a line of attack which might leave him open to

a retort on the ground of inconsistency. Some of his followers, with less knowledge of party records, and less caution, attacked the Government for granting these subsidies on the ground that the Liberal party had condemned the system of subsidizing railways. It is indisputable that certain specific subsidies, when proposed, were sharply criticised by the Liberal leaders of the day, but their censures were not directed against the principle of government aid to railways, but only to some particular grants as being made for improper purposes. The public accounts for the five years, during which the Liberals were in power, show the following payments of subsidies to railways, or to one enterprise:

1873-75	1875-77	1878	Total in five years.
\$ 1,856,466	\$ 5,937,717	\$ 2,228,373	\$ 9,122,556

With such a record it would be indeed a marvel of inconsistency for the party which paid those subsidies, and, as the public accounts show, expended a large amount in another form in aid of railways, to have gone on record, also as opposed to railway subsidies. But the charge of inconsistency made in this connection is based on a misapprehension, as objections to specific grants have been misread to be objections to any grants. The subsidies allowed by the Conservative party in more recent years were as follows:

1888-90	1891-92	1893-95	Total in five years.
\$ 8,790,000	\$ 4,897,000	\$ 7,500,500	\$ 21,187,500

Up to the year when the present Government came into power, the gross amount of aid granted to railways by the Dominion Governments was \$150,763,283, amounting to over \$9,000 per mile of the lines constructed. The Provincial Governments had given subsidies, or aid in other form to railways, to extent of \$29,727,512. The source from whence the total capital was derived for building our railways is shown in following return, with the proportion that each amount bears to the total:

Source of Capital.	1891	1893	1895	Per ct.
Ord. share capital	238,769,386	253,029,728	255,769,556	28.48
Preference capital	101,000,400	118,847,559	105,680,034	11.80
Bonded debt	292,291,654	307,225,888	330,785,546	36.96
Dom. Government	142,934,781	147,212,610	159,763,243	16.85
Prov. Government	25,731,966	28,230,356	29,727,512	3.34
Municipalities	13,817,509	14,917,957	14,180,687	1.58
Other sources	2,102,062	3,592,378	7,733,911	0.99
Totals	816,647,758	872,156,476	894,640,559	
Miles in operation		14,009	15,020	15.977
Capital per mile		\$58,290	\$58,100	\$55,915
Govt. subsidies per mile		\$12,047	\$11,700	\$11,290

From the above statistics it is evident that the financial assistance given to the railways built in Canada by the Federal and Provincial Governments has been a very material item in their capital resources, so large indeed that we doubt whether a number of existing lines would have been built at all, and whether others would have been so extended had assistance not been given by the Governments of Canada. Such being the situation, the question was raised in