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SITUATE some forty-five miles East of Montreal, on the Richelieu and St. Lawrence rivers, the city of Sorel may be said to derive a superb strategic advantage from its favored position on the world-famous St. Lawrence route. The city is a fine natural harbor with a minimum depth of thirty-five feet of water all the year round. Further than this, as a place for wintering ships of the very largest tonnages, it is unexcelled. Repairs of every sort and kind, on the largest, as well as the smallest, scale, can be effected in Sorel with ease and security. In short, ships that require over-hauling of any description cannot possibly do better than repair to Sorel for that purpose.

It is its almost unique advantages of the kind just mentioned which have, up to the present, done much to shape Sorel's industrial proclivities. So far, in its manufactures, the manufacture of marine equipment of various kinds and of ship-repairing facilities has predominated. But there is no reason why its industrial destiny should be limited to manufactures of this sort, though naturally they will always loom large in the commercial life of a place so situated. On the contrary, Sorel is an advantageous location for factories of almost any kind — and to this fact, concerns not connected in any way with the provision of marine equipment, etc., are beginning to wake up as is proved by more than one such having made arrangements recently to build there.

The Present Industrial Backbone.

Nevertheless, ship-building and ship-repairing and the necessary adjuncts to these industries constitute, at the present time, the industrial backbone of Sorel. The location there of the Dominion Government Shipyards, which are situated on the St. Joseph de Sorel side of the Richelieu river is a great help to the commercial life of the place. It is, indeed, capable of becoming a far greater one than it yet is. For these shipyards contain what is, beyond dispute, one of the very best ship-building plants, whether as regards natural facilities, or as regards equipment and apparatus generally, in all Canada. It is capable of turning out anything at all in the way of ships. At present, it gives employment to some 500 men in a comparatively busy time. But the feeling in Sorel seems to be that the Government should enable it to work to capacity which would give employment to more than double that number. In addition to ships, properly so called, a large number of tugs and dredges are built at these yards. Mr. Louis Lacouture is the superintendent.

Also situated on the St. Joseph de Sorel side of the river is the plant of the Transportation and Shipping Company where around 500 men find employment. Mr. D. La Chance is the present president of this concern which was started by a ship-building company which failed. On its failure, the concern was run under new auspices with Mr. D. La Chance as president. When it was taken over, six steel boats, each about 180 feet long, had been very nearly completed, as

SOLID SOREL

With its Fine Harbor, Cheap Sites, Labor and Power and Abundant Lumber for all Purposes, Sorel is an Ideal Location for Factories.

By A. R. R. JONES.

well as six wooden boats. The present management are finishing these. In fact, four of the wooden boats have already been finished and have left the plant. One is told that a contract to build another steel boat has been entered into since matters were put on their present basis. With its large machine shops and saw-mills, and other adjuncts to the business of ship-building, the plant of the Transportation and Shipping Company is a very big one.

Concerned With Transportation.

The Sincennes-McNaughton Line Ltd., with its premises on Charlotte Street, is a tug and transportation line, with as fine a transportation equipment as any concern in the same kind of business can show anywhere. It owns about fifty-five tugs and about twenty-five barges of all kinds. Mr. A. A. Larocque is the president, and Mr. Yvon Dupre the managing director, of the Sincennes-McNaughton Line.

Also at Sorel in dock just now, awaiting annual repairs, is the entire fleet of the Canada Steamship Lines operating between Montreal and Quebec, and a part of the Lakes fleet as well.

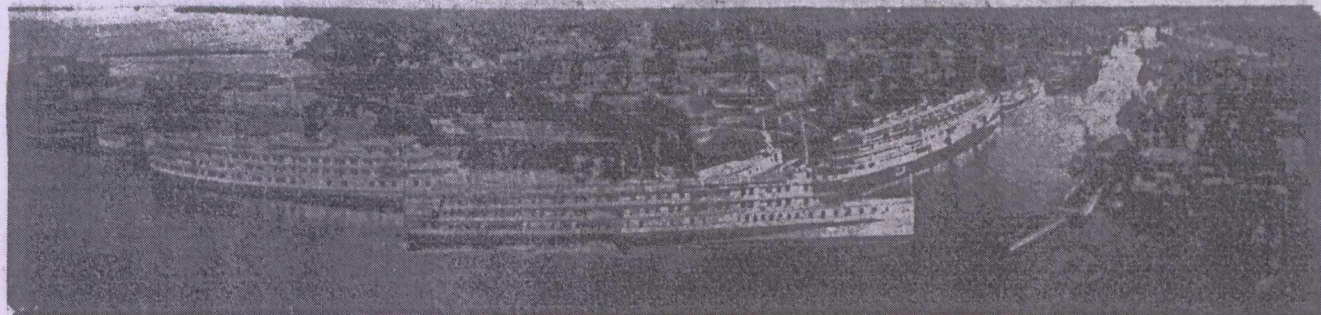
More Ships and Ship-Building.

The big plant of the Sorel Mechanical Shops Ltd. is located on King Street. This is a large firm of ship-builders, and manufacturers of marine engines and boilers and general shipping machinery and brass and gray iron foundries. Mr. A. A. Larocque is president of the business and Mr. P. A. Lavalle managing director, while Mr. William Noble is superintendent of the plant. This plant covers an area of some 115,000 square feet, and normally gives employment to some 250 men. Ships up to 250 feet in length have been built at it, so Mr. Lavalle told the writer, and all kinds of shipping machinery, including steam winches, cargo winches, warping winches, steering wheels, rudders, davits, propellers, steering engines, ash buckets, ash shoots, boilers, condensers, firebars, centrifugal circulating pumps and windlasses, are turned out from it. The plant has the great advantage of a large frontage of over 400 feet on the Richelieu river.

Marine Machinery and Necessities.

On Limoges Street is the plant of Beauchemin & Fils Ltd., of which Mr. Alfred Beauchemin is president, and Mr. L. P. Tremblay, secretary-treasurer. The business carried on there is that of producers of steel castings for locomotives and ship-building and steel foundries. Manganese, chrome and high carbon steel castings from 2½ lbs. to 20,000 lbs. can be produced at this plant, while castings for ships and dredges and ships' anchors are made a specialty. The plant covers a very big area and employs about 200 men. The output averages around 7,000 tons a year.

The firm of Beauchemin & Co., of which Mr. J. O. Pouliot is the head, has its plant on King Street, where it employs about 100 men.



Panoramic View of the Town of Sorel, Que.

—Photo by J. A. Desjardins.