

The New Brunswick Magazine.

Vol. V.

MARCH, 1905.

No. 2

ST. JOHN IS CANADA'S WINTER PORT.

How an Important Trade Has Been Developed For The All Canadian Route.

By John A. Bowes.

It took the people of Canada thirty years after the confederation of the provinces to recognize that they were not dependent on the United States for open ports through which to carry on their trade after the St. Lawrence route was frozen up for the winter. This was in a large measure due to the fact that the Grand Trunk Railway company instead of extending its line from River du Loup to St. John, thereby establishing a Canadian outlet for Canadian trade, built the line from Montreal to Portland, Maine, thereby diverting the trade of the rich province of Ontario to that port, and as the Grand Trunk extended and Ontario became more densely settled the value of the Canadian trade to Portland, Maine increased.

Following the construction of the Intercolonial railway a determined effort

was made by the government of the day to divert Canadian traffic over the government railway to Halifax. Merchandise was carried at exceptionally low rates—below the cost of transportation. Many tons of import freight, were landed at Halifax, but the difficulty of distance could not be overcome. Besides, the Intercolonial then ended at River du Loup, and the Grand Trunk which owned the rails to Montreal could not be expected to aid extensively in the building up of a trade in competition with another section of their own road. In addition to all this the Grand Trunk although greatly aided with Canadian money has never been managed as a national railway, but more as an International highway. The control of the company was in London and for years the directors sought only to keep the road