

continent, and thereby shorten the railroad haul on western goods to a minimum, or transfer her cargo to a smaller steamer, which by means of the St. Lawrence, the connecting canals and the great lakes carry freight half way across the continent at rates which defy competition by any route. When the control of Montreal harbor was passed over to a Commission, one of the first things done was to dredge a ship canal through the shoals of the St. Lawrence, a short distance below Montreal. The money to prosecute this work was furnished by the Dominion government and the interest on the bonds given for the money was made a charge on the trade of the port. The burden of providing local facilities for the trade of the country was therefore entirely removed from the rate payers of Montreal and placed where it really belonged on the trade of the country, which speaks volumes for the wisdom and foresight of the people of Montreal who conceived the idea. But great changes have taken place since the organization of the Montreal Harbor commission. Within a decade the size of ocean steamers had doubled, then trebled, and what was a safe channel for the vessels of twenty years ago is a dangerous one for those of today, and to apply the taxation necessary to dredge out the channel to a proper depth and width, and to provide proper accommodations for the growing trade of Montreal, would place a burden on the shipping and trade, so great that the St. Lawrence route would be severely handicapped. For years therefore the Federal government has made large grants for the improvement of the St. Lawrence route from the general treasury.

Quebec following the example of Montreal, placed her harbor in commission, and made extensive improvements in docks and other facilities which did not prove so remunerative as those of Montreal, and the interest on money advanced by the Dominion government has not been paid for years. It may be very justly claimed that the Quebec improvements have all been made at the expense of the Federal treasury. But with all the expenditure made, the St. Lawrence route is closed five months in the year, and the trade of Canada must seek other outlets during that period.

Naturally it would be expected that the west would say that the seaports of Canada, which are open when the St. Lawrence route is closed, should get this trade and be placed in a position to handle it. That St. John harbor is not in the same position as Montreal and Quebec is not the fault of the west. There may be a lack of national sentiment towards the east among those who live in the west, and who act and think as if Canada was bounded on the south by the great lakes and the St. Lawrence river but the people of St. John are alone blamable for the position of things at this port. As far back as 1875 the harbor of St. John could have been placed in commission. The Common Council of the city of St. John realizing that the harbor was a serious burden on the rate payers, and to place it in a proper condition would greatly add to this burden, put an act through the House of Assembly giving authority to dispose of their rights in the harbor to a commission to be constituted for that purpose. The Mackenzie ad-