

PORT OF MONTREAL.

Its National Value—The St. Lawrence Waterway Asset—Shipping Ports Considered.

Canada will produce during the twentieth century, from one quarter of her available wheat areas in the West, more wheat than now comprises the total wheat crop of the United States. This was a statement made by Major George W. Stephens, chairman of the Montreal Harbor Commissioners, in his address delivered to the Toronto Empire Club this week.

There are but two methods, he said, of providing for the handling of this new business, not to mention the concurrent industrial production of the country. 1st.—By increasing transportation and terminal facilities on Canadian soil. 2nd.—By allowing business to be taken care of by transportation routes and sea terminals not within the limits of this Dominion.

Consider the St. Lawrence route as comprising: 1st.—The channel which gives access to the head of ocean navigation. 2nd.—The inland waterway which links the sea route with the heart of a great continent. 3rd.—The ocean inland distributing ports belonging to the system. The whole system extending from Fort William to the sea, has a distance of 2,500 miles.

Into this system, a great national undertaking, are going the money, the genius and patriotism of the Canadian people, and out of it are coming year by year, privileges and power to the transportation interests of Canada, instead of diversity of control and authority. One day there will preside over this great water route a directorate of far-sighted men, who will guide and control its destinies, will shape and administer its transportation efficiency in a manner that will preserve to Canada the prestige of possessing the shortest and deepest trade route from the heart of this continent to the sea.

The Development of Canada.

Canada with her six millions of people starts the twentieth century with the same population as the United States did the nineteenth, but with this difference—not huddled together on the sea coast as was the case with our southern neighbor, but stretched out across the northern half of this continent, in an unbroken line of prosperous provinces from sea to sea, linked together by the steel ribbons of three great transcontinental railroads, possessing sea ports on both oceans, and 26,000 miles of railway in operation.

In the possession of this great national asset, the St. Lawrence waterway, Canada unquestionably has within her midst the cheapest and most efficient national trade route on this continent. The St. Lawrence River to-day carries to and from the port of Montreal, one-third of the country's national trade, equivalent to something over \$200,000,000 in value during seven months of the year.

In this enterprise there are 6,000,000 Canadian shareholders all equally interested, who have invested in the St. Lawrence ship channel and the port of Montreal \$20,000,000, and upon this investment they are doing a business of \$200,000,000 in value per annum, and are carrying in weight to and from this country over their national highway over 4,000,000 tons per annum of exports and imports. If the average cost of transporting 4,000,000 tons by water, 1,000 miles, is ten cents a ton, the cost to the people of Canada over the Canadian waterway would equal \$400,000. If on the other hand, the St. Lawrence route were obliterated and the 4,000,000 tons of exports and imports had to travel that 1,000 miles by rail, the Canadian people would be called upon to spend for its transportation \$4,000,000, just ten times the rate of to-day, effecting an annual saving of \$3,600,000.

St. Lawrence Navigation Safe.

Within the last five years this channel has been lighted and buoyed in a manner to make it the equal in aids to navigation of any channel in the world. Its lighting between Quebec and Montreal has added sixty days to the season, by making navigation as safe by night as by day.

It is now 550 feet wide in the straight and 750 feet at the curves, and its depth varies from a minimum of 40 feet in the spring to 31 feet in the fall. Fifteen years ago the largest vessel trading in the St. Lawrence had a tonnage of 6,000. Ten years ago the tonnage of the largest ship trading in the St. Lawrence was 10,000. To-day ships of 15,000 tons come to the port of Montreal. This means that within the next ten years, at the same rate of increase, ships of 25,000 tons will be doing business in the St. Lawrence trade, and this is what the ocean channel and the Canadian sea termini must be prepared to meet.

The question of importance to Canadians is to carefully consider what position our present St. Lawrence waterway

will occupy in view of the added water facilities provided through American territory. The Canadian route as it exists must be tested, and the question of adequate water terminals at the points of interchange examined, for it will ill become the spirit of twentieth century Canadianism to rely on nature alone for the transportation of her commerce. Where the rail meets the water at Fort William, terminal facilities are in good hands and the foundations are being laid to meet future traffic. Montreal is creating elevator and conveyer capacities to meet this new business. Somewhere between Montreal and Fort William there must be created ample and adequate terminal accommodation at the best interchange point between the lake and river commerce. From Lake Superior to the eastern end of Lake Erie the waterway conditions are identical for both, and the lake traffic reaches Buffalo and Port Colborne under like conditions. Without neutral storage capacity the transportation of grain becomes through the United States a lake and rail proposition. We offset this with a beginning of a terminal at Port Colborne, having a storage capacity of 1,000,000 bushels and from Port Colborne onward to the sea there is a channel depth of 14 feet compared with the channel depth of 11 feet through the new barge canal of our neighbor. The Port Colborne elevator is not controlled by any railway and is free to receive water-borne grain for transfer through the Welland Canal or by railway, depending upon the route. Coming through the Welland Canal into Lake Ontario we have on the American side the port of Oswego with an elevator capacity of 800,000 bushels and on the Canadian side we have Prescott and Kingston, with an elevator capacity of 1,800,000.

The present Canadian route under equal terminal development has four days per trip advantage on the new American route, with the existing conditions on the Canadian side as against the improved conditions in five years on the American side.

The Physical Conditions of the Canadian Waterway.

In physical conditions, the present Canadian waterway may be counted upon to hold its own against the new American barge canal in process of construction. The Canadian route of to-day is three feet deeper, has fifteen fewer locks, has a greater carrying capacity and is 110 miles shorter than will be the new barge canal from Buffalo to New York, when in 1915 it will be open for business. Our present weakness is in storage capacity, terminal facilities and ship tonnage. Without this equipment the best waterway in the world will only yield a small percentage of its efficiency. In the order of their importance, the problems to be worked out to maintain the prestige of the St. Lawrence route are: 1st.—Vastly greater terminal facilities. 2nd.—Increased storage capacity. 3rd.—A deeper inland waterway.

The Development of Montreal.

Up to the present time there have been spent in the development of the port of Montreal, 12 million, and upon the St. Lawrence Ship Canal 10 million, a total of 22 million, and upon that capital investment there is transacted a tonnage of 5½ millions in nine months. The monthly business, export and import, in value exceeds that of any port in North America except New York.

The national port controls 32 miles of river frontage without a single dollar of vested interest to impede its economical development. Montreal controls and operates its own railways and is building a high level railway from one end of the harbor to the other. This high level road will give to every industrial established on the river front, access to every railway doing business with Montreal, on the same terms and deep water communication as well.

Equipped With Expensive Grain Handling System.

Montreal is equipped with the most modern and most expensive grain handling system in the world, every ship being fed with grain at her own berth night or day.

Within the last two years it has been possible to reduce the handling cost of every ton of through freight by one-half, the reduction amounting to 22½ cents per ton.

Montreal is practically a free port, no tonnage dues being charged against the ship. She raises her revenue through a modest wharfage charge, shed rentals and privileges and has been able to pay up to the present all her interests and maintenance charges without resorting to other sources of revenue ordinarily used in other ports.

Finally, it is the aim of the harbor commissioners of Montreal to create a modern business sea port, whose economic administration and careful development will provide to Canadians a sea port of which they shall be justly proud.

Mr. Paul B. Hanson, of Montreal, who for the past two years has been local manager in the Maritime district for The Dunlop Tire and Rubber Goods Company, with headquarters in St. John, N.B., has been appointed manager over the Dunlop Company's Quebec interests, with headquarters at 426 St. James Street, Montreal.