

PREFATORY.

capacity of ships coming to this port, is shown by the following memoranda from the Harbor-Master's Register,—showing the draft of water of vessels clearing at the Custom-House here during the past three seasons :—

	18 feet and over.	19 feet and over.	20 feet and over.	21 feet and over.	22 feet and over.	Total drawing 18 ft. to 22 ft. 6 in.
No. of vessels in 1869.....	41	26	38	14	6	125
" " " 1870.....	68	48	17	5	none.	138
" " " 1871.....	97	47	18	7	2	171

The following statement shows the increase, in periods of five years since 1856, of the tonnage of vessels arriving from sea, and of river craft :—

	Tonnage Vessels from Sea.	Tonnage River Craft.	Total Tonnage.	Increase.
1857.....	67,740	334,523	402,263	from 1857 to 1861 96 per cent.
1858.....	78,809	343,224	422,033	
1859.....	94,660	459,065	553,725	
1860.....	121,539	348,652	470,201	
1861.....	261,793	530,224	792,017	
1862.....	265,243	523,991	789,234	from 1862 to 1866 2½ per cent.
1863.....	209,224	534,740	743,964	
1864.....	161,901	439,057	600,958	
1865.....	152,943	601,071	754,014	
1866.....	205,775	613,679	819,454	
1867.....	199,043	744,476	943,519	from 1867 to 1871 23½ per cent.
1868.....	198,759	746,921	945,680	
1869.....	259,863	721,324	981,187	
1870.....	316,846	819,476	1,136,322	
1871.....	353,621	824,787	1,178,408	

Increase from 1857 up to 1871,—190 per cent.

Statements in different parts of the Report show how rapidly steam tonnage is taking the place of sailing vessels in the carrying trade between Great Britain and the St. Lawrence. In the present year (1872) there will be 41 steamships plying between Montreal and ports in the United Kingdom, (besides a number of transient steamers)—this port being only second to New York in point of importance; and notwithstanding the popularity of iron clipper-ships, and the rapidity and cheapness of transport which they afford, there is probably a time not far distant when all, or nearly all the foreign commerce of the Dominion will be carried in steamships. The policy of the Federal Government is to make the approaches to the coasts of Canada as safe as those to any other part of the American sea-board—and with this end in view, light-houses, beacons, and fog-trumpets, are to be placed at such intervals as that in passing out of sight or sound of one the mariner will be within range of another. The work of channel-deepening, and providing harbor accommodation for the largest ocean craft, will make Montreal the great objective point not only for the trade of the Western States, but also for the transit