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BEG TO ANNOUNCE THAT

REPEAT CABLE ORDERS

Are expected about the latter end of this month. Orders not completed will receive immediate attention on receipt.

We are daily receiving large shipments and expect our stock completed the first week in March.

D. McCall & Co.,**WHOLESALE MILLINERY****IMPORTERS,****51 Yonge Street. Toronto.****The Journal of Commerce**

FINANCE AND INSURANCE REVIEW.

MONTREAL, MARCH 11, 1881.

DOMINION PUBLIC WORKS.

The annual report of the Minister of Public Works furnishes ample material for reflection on the system which prevails in the Dominion. The separation of the department into two branches, must seem to those, who study the reports of the Ministers on the works which they have to supervise, to have been a matter of necessity. The railways and canals would seem to furnish full occupation for one minister, and the Minister of Public Works has under his control public buildings, harbours and rivers, dredging, slides and booms, and telegraphs. We should have supposed that telegraphs would have been more conveniently

placed under the Minister of Railways. We are unable to gather from the report the number of public buildings which are under the control of the department, but we know that there are many more than are tabulated in the contents of the report, prominent among which we may mention the Toronto Custom House and the Montreal Custom House and post office. There are about thirty-two buildings mentioned in the report, while money was expended on about seventy-two. In Nova Scotia there are 19 harbours and rivers under the control of the department, in New Brunswick 6, in Prince Edward Island 7, in Quebec 18, in Ontario 13, in Manitoba and in British Columbia 3, or an aggregate of 68 harbours and rivers between the Atlantic and the Pacific under the supervision of a department at Ottawa. The slides and booms for facilitating the descent of lumber are numerous. In the Ottawa district alone there are 66 stations, and there are others on the St. Maurice, Saguenay and Trent. The expenses of staff and maintenance under this head are about the same as the expenditure for construction and repairs. The dredging is an important item in the expenditure. The fact is that dredging is being carried on in nearly all the Provinces, in Victoria Harbour, and the Frazer River, B.C., and in the Maritime Provinces and elsewhere. There are 9 dredges, 2 steam tugs, and over 30 scows owned by the department.

We should imagine that when so many works of a local character are undertaken by the central government there ought not to be a second opinion as to the propriety of relieving the port of Montreal of the burden of deepening the channel of the river St. Lawrence, and more especially as it falls on the trade of the entire country west of Montreal. The subject has been brought fully under the consideration of the Minister in elaborate reports from the Harbour Commissioners and the Board of Trade, and the important questions of pilotage and towage have also been treated by those bodies. It is by no means surprising that foreign vessels avoid the St. Lawrence where a towage system, which can only be described as grossly fraudulent, is tolerated. The Harbor Commissioners report that about the year 1874 the tug boat owners agreed upon a tariff, which was considered very high by the ship owners, who obtained discounts, until the tariff was practically abandoned, and, during the last three years, "barely one-third to one-half of the tariff rate has been paid by regular trading vessels." The report proceeds thus: "Strange vessels, however, coming

"to the river for the first time, are met "by the tugs, and, if they are unaware of "the competition, are sometimes induced to pay tariff rates, the captains "supposing the tariff was a legal status, "and they are much surprised afterwards "to find that it is simply an obsolete "tariff of the tug owners themselves, and "that they have been overcharged." A paragraph more utterly disgraceful to the country, which has found no remedy for such practices, has, we venture to assert, never emanated from a department of the Government. It is, however, to be regretted that, in reply to the query of the minister, "What remedy your Board "would propose to lessen the cost of towage of sailing vessels from Father Point "to Quebec, and from Quebec to Montreal," the Harbour Commissioners could only answer that "the question was a very difficult one," and, "if the tug owners could be got to agree upon reasonable maximum rates," it would benefit themselves, and spare much vexation to vessels visiting our ports for the first time. We have no confidence whatever in the suggestion of the Harbor Commissioners. Fraudulent practices must be put a stop to by measures of a much more stringent character.

The Board of Trade has furnished some valuable statistics as to the comparative rates of towage at other ports of a 600 ton vessel. The rates at Boston and New York are \$35 inwards and outwards, or \$70 both ways; at Philadelphia, \$51.50 and \$77.25; at Baltimore, \$142 inwards and same outward, \$284 in all. The report then proceeds: "It would be misleading to "quote rates of towage here, as in the "foregoing examples," because, though tow boat officials sometimes refer to the "regular tariff" (viz., when they want to swindle strangers) "there is practically no recognized tariff of rates for tug boat service in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence." An opposition company adopted a tariff with a mere nominal reduction, which is characterized by the Board of Trade as "serving only to mislead unsuspecting ship masters." The Board of Trade state that the chief sufferers by a system which is maintained, according to "a well-informed person at Quebec," "by the unblushing lying of agents which some of the tug owners keep for the purpose," are those which come into the St. Lawrence trade for the first time, "and their experience is often so hard and cheerless that they never return." The remedies suggested by the Board are: 1st. To empower the Harbor Trust to provide towage facilities at cost of service. 2nd. That a company should