

Montreal Affairs.

THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS OF MONTREAL HARBOUR—HISTORY OF PLAN NO. 6—THE GOVERNMENT ENGINEERS ADVISE ITS MODIFICATION—THE FAMOUS GUARD PIER TO BE SHORTENED AND THE MAISONNEUVE BASIN SCHEME POSTPONED—TWO MILLION DOLLARS REQUIRED BUT THE HARBOUR DUES WILL NOT BE RAISED—A FREE PORT HOPED FOR—THE CHATEAU DE RAMZAY; IT IS BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A UNIQUE MUSEUM; SOME OF ITS CONTENTS—THE NEW PRESIDENTS OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY AND THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY EN ROUTE FOR MONTREAL.

DURING the past week there has been made public the reports of Messrs. Munro, Anderson, and Coste, Government Engineers, on the proposed improvements of Montreal harbour. For some years past the Harbour Commissioners have been working towards the completion of improvements known under the technical title of Plan No. 6. The distinguishing feature of this was the construction of a guard pier 7,000 feet in length from the Victoria Bridge, down the St. Lawrence, to a point opposite the central portion of the city. This pier was to have wharfage accommodation on its inward side: the landlocked basin to be created by its construction was to contain four high level wharves, while its depth was to be increased by dredging to a uniform depth of 27 feet 6 inches at low water: and four low level wharves at the extreme east end of the city were also to be constructed.

Work on the guard pier has been going on, in a more or less hap-hazard manner, for years; and now there rises from the bosom of the St. Lawrence, at a distance of perhaps three-quarters of a mile from the wharves, a long low mud-colored ridge; this is the guard pier in process of construction. All day long during the summer time derricks dip their long arms down to the floor of the river and, bringing up huge masses of mud, deposit them on the bank which thus is ever extending itself upwards towards the Victoria Bridge. There has been a good deal of criticism of the Commissioners for the slowness which has always marked the progress of the work; and two years ago Alderman Hurleau, one of the city representatives on the Board, brought forward a scheme involving a large extra expenditure and the possible abandonment of Plan No. 6 altogether. He proposed that at the east end of the city, below the St. Mary's current, which forms the only difficulty in the approach to the city by the river, there should be excavated in the low-lying lands of Maisonneuve an immense inland basin with extensive wharfage accommodation. Alderman Hurleau is one of the little group of men who initiated in the City Council and carried through the extensive scheme of street-widening and expropriations which have modernized this city at an appalling cost; and he enlisted in support of this new venture all the personal and sectional influence that had borne down all opposition to his civic programme; and the Board, after much demurring, accepted the proposition, as secondary, however, to the general plan which had years before been decided upon.

The Harbour Board, which had already been authorized by the Government to raise one million dollars, and had been given a million dollars by the city, went to the Government a year ago and asked for its assistance in raising an additional three million dollars for the completion of these improvements. The assistance, it was suggested, should take the form of a guarantee of interest. The Government referred the matter to the engineers of its Public Works Department; and they have now made their report.

In this they advise, to briefly summarize their suggestions, that Plan No. 6 be modified and the Maisonneuve Basin Scheme be postponed. By shortening the guard pier, leaving an open space through which the river's current will run; building but two wharves in place of four, limiting the dredging to certain parts of the harbour, and abandoning the building of the Hochelaga wharves, they estimate, that two million dollars will complete the works; and for the interest charges on this sum they regard the revenue of the harbour as sufficient security. They accordingly advise that aid to that degree, either as a loan or through a guarantee of interest, be given.

The report goes on to say: "With the future increase of trade expected, improvements on a larger scale must be ultimately provided at a point where traffic is less congested, where it will be possible at a reasonable cost to connect the

wharves with all the railway systems as well as provide room for storage of heavy freight, lumber, cattle, grain, etc. There can be no question that the locality best fulfilling these conditions is the river front below St. Mary's current between Longue Pointe and Maisonneuve. If the ratio of increase in trade of Montreal, and of the Dominion, be anything like what is expected from these important branches of traffic, it should not be more than seven or eight years before the suggested extension of this harbour eastward and the construction of a dry dock will be a necessity, and in order to have the works completed in time to meet the requirements, a beginning should be made without delay." And they recommend that, as this basin will be utilized almost entirely for the transference of western products to ocean transports or the reverse, it be regarded as a national undertaking, and built out of the public funds.

The Harbour Board, at the meeting last week, accepted the proposed modifications; and will proceed to raise the money when the Finance Minister decides what form the assistance shall take. It is not intended, as a result of all this expenditure, to raise the harbour dues; indeed the opinion is strongly growing that, some way or another, means should be taken to make this a free port.

The work of transforming the Chateau de Ramezay into a museum is going steadily on under the direction of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society. On the walls will be spread the varied collection of portraits, historical maps, and engravings which the Society has gathered together by many years of zealous work. This includes a large lot of tools, weapons, etc., from the ruins of the celebrated fortress at Louisbourg, Indian curiosities from Alaska, and such things as the epaulettes of an officer in 1812, the key to General Murray's office in Quebec, a scale used in 1686; the weather vanes on such old buildings as the Recollet Church and the old market; a copper flint box of the last century, handsomely embossed, and many other things of historical value. The portrait gallery already embraces over one hundred portraits, varying in form from the costly painting to the old-fashioned daguerrotype of by-gone worthies. The Chateau itself is not the least interesting feature of the exhibition with its spacious halls and corridors above and its massive bomb-proof vaults below. The nucleus of a library has been formed by the donation of five thousand carefully chosen volumes by H. T. Tiffin. It is expected that the museum and library will, by the contributions of generous citizens, grow, until they become great national repositories. Gifts are being constantly received by them.

Principal Peterson, the new head of McGill University, is now on the ocean and will arrive here at the end of the present week. Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, the new President of the Grand Trunk Railway, is also on his way to this city, via New York, and is expected here in a day or so. There is, of course a good deal of anxiety among Grand Trunk officials over his advent, as it is thought it will be followed by a general "shake-up."

At Street Corners.

I SHOULD be sincerely sorry to see a movement so hopeful and useful as that which started the Toronto Technical School, come to grief on the rocks of incompetency on the part of the Board of Management. But there is no doubt that some of the members are not adequate to their position. They are not educationists. They are simply delegates representing certain prejudices and cliques. Under these circumstances the problem appears to be whether the efforts of the sound part of the board will be enough to counterbalance those of its unsound section. The idea of appointing teachers or officers out of mere friendly considerations or for any reason but that of fitness is absurd. This may seem to be a truism, but it is one that needs emphasizing with regard to the Technical School.

Mr. A. Dickson Patterson, R.C.A., has just completed a fine portrait of Judge Burton. I had the pleasure of seeing it in his studio the other day, and was much struck with it, not only because of its excellent likeness to the original, but for the strength and artistic excellence of its vigorous brush work. Mr. Patterson has started on a line of