

The winter of 1875-76 was so unfavorable for getting out timber that when work commenced this season, the supply of materials was not what could have been desired. Later in the season the supply improved, and warranted the commencement of the extension of the west pier, the first crib of which was sunk August 28th, and the last November 9th—the number of cribs being sixteen. The extension from end to end resting on the rock, the superstructure was commenced as soon as the cribs had been exposed to some rough weather, and is now nearly completed, the work being still in progress.

The beacon to mark the point of the reef, was successfully sunk into position on the 16th of September, and has since been worked upon whenever the weather permitted, the structure being now up to a height of twelve feet above water.

The superstructure of the docking has been finished across the south end of the basin.

The 1st and 2nd detached blocks of pier work, each 120 x 30 feet, have been completed, and two cribs of the 3rd detached block were sunk at date of last measurement.

A good supply of timber is now on the ground, and should the weather permit, the work will be continued throughout the winter.

On the 30th of October last, an explosion of Nitro-Glycerine occurred, at an isolated crib to the east of Port Colborne harbor, which had been built by the contractor as a small intermediate magazine.

By this explosion a man named Colbert King, (incorrectly called John King in my report dated Oct. 30, 1876), whose duty it was to carry Nitro-Glycerine to the drills lost his life, being literally blown to atoms. The cause of the explosion can only be conjectured.

Windows were broken in Port Colborne and the plaster of some houses near the Lake shore was badly shaken by the concussion, but beyond this and the shattering of the crib, I have not heard of any damage to property.

A crib to replace the shattered one has been sunk to the east of the harbor, but at a greater distance from the shore than the former one, and the contractor has taken additional precautions to guard against accidents in the future.

The present contract provides for the removal of a portion of the superstructure of the west pier, but does not fix the limit.

The superstructure is much damaged in places, especially in the neighborhood of the lighthouses, and if allowed to remain in its present condition much longer will be liable to be carried away by a heavy gale with high water.

I would recommend its removal throughout, and should this be determined upon, the contractor should have notice given him in time to arrange for the timber this winter.

I have not referred to the existing or required lighthouses, as I understand they are not under the control of the Department of Public Works.

The entire surveys, plans and descriptions of the lands taken for canal enlargement, on the ten miles under contract on the southern division, have been made by myself and assistants, without any additional staff, and have involved an amount of work that could only be accomplished by unusually long hours.

The quantities in the accompanying table are taken from the Progress Estimates for November, which were not out of hand until the morning of the 5th inst.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed.)

W. G. THOMPSON,

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Welland Canal Enlargement.*

JOHN PAGE, Esq.,

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