

Charles P. Hébert, Chairman; E. L. Bond, W. I. Gear, Alex. McFee, Geo. Sumner.

The annual report of the Port Warden is as follows :—

MONTREAL, 31st Dec. 1900.

*To the President and Council of the Montreal Board of Trade.*

Gentlemen,—I have the honour to submit the annual report of the business of this office, with statements of exports, receipts and expenditure for the year 1900.

Navigation opened by the arrival from sea of the SS. Lake Megantic at 5 p. m. Thursday 26th April, followed at 7 p. m. by the SS. Vancouver, and closed with the departure for sea at 1 p. m., 3rd Dec., of the SS. Paliki, one of the Algoma Central Steamship Co.'s vessels, which loaded part cargo of steel at Conneant, Ohio, Lake Erie, completing her cargo here with lumber for Cardiff.

The SS. Paliki is the fourth vessel this company has sent this fall from the Lakes for winter employment in Europe or elsewhere. This is a new departure brought about by the deepening of the canals and channels of the St. Lawrence, from the Great Lakes, which promises in the not very distant future to assume very large proportions; there is already another company, viz: The North Western Transportation Co., building steamers to run direct between Chicago and Liverpool.

The close of this season has been phenomenal, the last sailing was almost unprecedentedly late, being the latest departure for sea since the year 1864, the weather open and mild for some time after the last vessel sailed. The first sailing vessel to arrive was the Schooner Golden Hind from Barbadoes, with a cargo of molasses, on the 20th May. The first vessel to enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence this season by the Straits of Belle Isle was the SS. Endeavour, which reported having passed Belle Isle 9.20 p. m., 20th June. Saw no ice.

The season of 1900 has been remarkable for the inauguration of two important incidents, namely, the opening of direct trade from the west by the way of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Canals to European ports, and the departure hence of a steamer light to load a cargo of grain, etc., at Quebec, this latter was the SS. Albanian of the Leyland Line, which sailed hence on the 3rd Nov., to take the first cargo of grain to be loaded from the new elevator at Quebec; the grain came direct from the west over the Great Northern Railway; this event also inaugurated the opening of the road for through western traffic to Quebec.

Four hundred and sixteen oversea or foreign going vessels of all kinds were entered at this office with a tonnage of 1,038,234 tons, a decrease of eighteen vessels and 54,721 tons compared with last year. The business to lower ports this season consisted of, entered two hundred and seventy one vessels of all classes, with a tonnage of 327,559 tons, a decrease of 74 vessels and 74,766 tons. Clearance of vessels loaded for the lower ports were as follows: Eighty-four vessels of all classes with a tonnage of 63,171 tons, as against one hundred and five vessels of all classes last year, with a tonnage of 91,045 tons, a decrease of 21 vessels and 27,874 tons. One hundred and eighty seven vessels cleared for the lower ports in ballast, being solely in the coal carrying trade.

Thus you will see there has been a marked all-round decrease in tonnage entering and leaving the port this season. The falling off of tonnage in the foreign trade may be accounted for by the continued employment of a number of steamers, belonging to the regular lines frequenting this port, as transports in connection with the war in South Africa, but the large diminution of tonnage in the lower port trade at the early part of the season was brought about by the almost prohibitory hull insurance rates demanded for the St. Lawrence trade and the no B. N. A. clause in Atlantic Charters; later in the season it was more or less affected by the inability to procure coal in sufficient quantities, which resulted in the vessels being taken off and placed on foreign voyages from Quebec and elsewhere.