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THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE ROUTE.*

(Concluded from last issue).

While glad to throw off the colonial yoke, the United States was not willing to relinquish colonial advantages, and it may seem strange to you to be told that United States traders made a strong effort to continue enjoying the advantages of the Navigation Act. The Navigation Act was an act under which trade to British ports was permitted only in British ships, and when at last the United Statesians found themselves formally and by legal opinion declared foreigners and not eligible to come into Canada under the act, they resorted to forging the registers of their vessels, some two hundred being issued between 1788 and 1790, being chiefly Mediterranean certificates, with which region Canada had for many years a fairly extensive trade. The Navigation Act was repealed for Canada in 1849.

Canada's trade with the rest of the continent towards the close of the eighteenth century was not very extensive. From 1768 to 1783 inclusive, the entries at Quebec averaged only twenty four per annum, the average burden being 64 tons. The largest number of arrivals was 76 in 1774, and the largest average tonnage was 97 tons in 1780. The average annual clearings during that period was 26, and the average tonnage cleared was eighty tons. The largest

number of clearings was 38 in 1778 and the largest average tonnage was 136 in 1781. In 1782 there were only two arrivals and in 1780 only twelve vessels cleared. The average tonnage in 1769 was 41 tons and the lowest yearly average of tonnage cleared was 49 tons in 1771 and 1773. Such were the cockle shell coasters of a century ago. These vessels brought in the bulk of the rum used in the country, and a very large portion of the coffee, sugar and molasses, although the last two were most extensively brought from the West Indies. Large quantities of pease were exported between 1770 and 1775, with much lumber, wheat biscuit and flour. The exports of flour between 1768 and 1783 averaged 2,334 barrels per annum. In 1802 Canada exported 1,010,033 bushels of wheat, all countries, 28,301 barrels of flour and 22,051 cwt. of biscuit. The average tonnage of the ships that entered at Quebec from Great Britain from 1768 to 1780 was 145 tons and the average crew was ten men. In 1793 two fairly large vessels, one of 299 tons and the other of 301 tons cleared from that port, but there was one mere jolly boat of 72 tons and the average had risen only to 176 tons. Great Britain was Canada's chief port for potash, fish oil and lumber. Before the United States revolution thirty-four ships and four hundred men satisfied the commerce of Britain with Canada annually. The West Indian trade and trade to ports other than British or American was not large in those days, and was confined chiefly to codfish, salmon, boards, planks and wheat exported; and imports of molasses, sugar and salt. Wines and teas were brought usually from England. Canada did a good trade in masts in those early days, these being usually sent to Gibraltar.

The position of Governor-General of Canada was by no means a sinecure in those early days. Canada was cut off for six months in the year from all communication with the Motherland, except via Halifax by couriers to Acadia. Mails were not frequent even in summer, and the Governor was a Governor indeed. One of Haldimand's first proposals was the establishment of a line of fast vessels, to sail once a month or every six weeks for the conveyance of the mails to and from Europe. It was not, however, until 1787 that a monthly mail was established between London and Halifax. The European news of the Quebec Gazette in 1764 was seventy days old. The trade fleet usually left Great Britain for Canada towards the end of March, and a second fleet followed in July. It may be inferred from the register of shipping at Quebec that the season of the port opened 1st July and closed 1st October, a period of three months, now doubled. Mention has already been made of the early efforts of the French to chart and landmark the St. Lawrence. Under early British rule further progress was made. It is not generally known that the celebrated Captain Cook was with Wolfe at the capture of Quebec and aided that commander very greatly by taking soundings in and about the harbor of Quebec, being so nearly captured on one occasion that his foes had leaped into one end of his boat as he sprang out of the other. He also charted the river below Quebec in places that had been found intricate and dangerous, and, so said his biographer in 1788, "his work was so accurate

*Abridged by the author, Arthur Weir, B.Sc., from a lecture delivered before the Applied Science students of McGill University, Montreal, January, 1899, and published exclusively in THE CANADIAN ENGINEER.