

MONTREAL'S HARBOUR.

There are in the newly issued reports of the Harbour Commissioners of Montreal, two paragraphs which aptly and graphically describe the rise of Montreal as the head of Canada's ocean navigation. The first reads:—

"The year 1909 marked the completion of one hundred years since the first boat driven by steam churned the waters of the St. Lawrence. The old "Accommodation" with a 75 foot keel and drawing six feet started on her first trip from Montreal to Quebec on November 3, 1809, making the passage in 36 hours actual sailing time."

And the second paragraph runs:—

"There has been in the St. Lawrence ship channel for the first half of our season of navigation a low water depth of 36 feet, which would permit of the "Mauretania" navigating the channel to Montreal."

Throughout the reports there is this note of progress and expansion. During the year 1909, which is the period covered by these reports, three new lines entered the St. Lawrence trade; in the current season of navigation we have had the Canadian Northern's fine new "Royal" boats at Montreal, and the opening of the "cross-country" service to Australian ports; in 1911 it is generally assumed there will be further new house flags on fast passenger boats in the river; and looking a little beyond that, it is only necessary to quote Major Washington Stephens, "Ships of 15,000 tons are moored to the quays of Montreal to-day as easily as those of 20,000 will be in the near future."

The striking advance made by the port during the last decade is clearly shown in the following figures of the number of vessels arriving in port in each year since 1900 and their tonnage:—

Year	Transatlantic.		Maritime Provinces.		Inland.		Grand Total.	
	Ves- sels.	Tonnage.	Ves- sels.	Tonnage.	Ves- sels.	Tonnage.	Ves- sels.	Tonnage.
1900	431	1,039,151	295	554,735	8,347	1,669,49	9,073	1,033,380
1901	419	1,016,918	293	536,136	8,450	1,683,186	9,192	1,133,334
1902	436	1,072,538	322	567,734	9,395	1,885,250	10,153	1,265,522
1903	484	1,418,156	317	472,747	15,338	2,415,797	16,140	1,396,596
1904	417	1,270,640	371	586,057	10,063	2,354,975	10,859	1,211,672
1905	442	1,354,829	391	585,227	11,112	2,785,551	11,945	1,225,607
1906	439	1,380,835	38	592,358	12,557	3,095,174	13,377	1,968,395
1907	381	1,339,014	361	566,972	14,420	3,620,95	15,161	1,546,936
1908	364	1,315,688	375	642,916	12,434	3,589,424	13,173	1,518,028
1909	371	1,436,963	299	474,450	10,991	3,146,491	1,661	3,057,907

One of the interesting things about the table is its revelation of the gradual increase in the size of the boats using the St. Lawrence route. While in 1900 431 Transatlantic vessels came into port, and in 1903, 484, the tonnage of last year's 371 vessels exceeded markedly that of the larger numbers of previous years, and is in point of fact, the largest tonnage in the decade. A similar tendency to growth in size is noticeable in both vessels from the Maritime Provinces and inland. This increase in the size of vessels in the Montreal trade is, of course, merely the local manifestation of a world-wide tendency towards size in steamships, a tendency at the present time so pronounced, that, in the opinion of the chairman of the Canada line the future of the New York

and Liverpool trade lies with 50,000 ton combined passenger and cargo boats. In these circumstances it is highly satisfactory to find that the Commissioners are able to state that "The safety of the St. Lawrence ship channel to Montreal has been emphasised this year more than ever. Passenger and cargo vessels of 15,000 tons, such as the "Laurentic" and "Megantic" have used it throughout the entire season with no untoward incident marking their first year's run to this port. To-day captains of ships declare the St. Lawrence to be the best lighted and buoyed channel in the world, and it is due to their recommendation that the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board of Liverpool have, during the past season, adopted the type of gas buoy used on the St. Lawrence river."

While the Commissioners are able to refer with pride to the increasing popularity of the St. Lawrence route with passengers—the number of passengers who, during the last few weeks have passed through Montreal to and from points in the United States is gratifying corroborative evidence in this matter—the reports also point out Montreal's importance as a freight port. The grain elevator during the past three years has handled the following:—

	Bushels.
1907	1,078,289
1908	8,661,350
1909	11,554,262

On several occasions during 1909, say the Commissioners, although day and night shifts were employed, the elevator was not able to handle the trade offering. Last season the system of grain conveyors connecting the elevator direct with ten of the new steel sheds, so that ships might receive grain at their own berths, day or night, without interfering with the loading or unloading of general cargo was completed. Although this really constituted the largest grain conveyor system in the world, the Commissioners decided this year, in order to meet the demands of the shipping interests, to extend the system to the four sheds on the Jacques-Cartier pier, to that vessels now berthing at any of the fourteen steel sheds in the central portion of the Harbour may have grain loaded into their holds without moving.

Even now, add the Commissioners, the port of Montreal will in no sense be properly equipped to take charge of the large quantity of grain expected in the fall of 1910 from the Victoria Harbour and other Georgian Bay ports over the Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk railways. This rail-handled grain business will be new business for the Harbour and provision must be made to take care of it.

Turning to the financial side of the operations, the receipts on revenue account during the year were \$687,772 of which \$413,648 was harbour revenue. This is an increase of \$26,781 over the harbour revenue of 1908, and there were all round increases also in the other sources of revenue. The total disbursements chargeable to revenue were \$686,710, an increase over the previous year of \$32,617. The amount disbursed on capital account was \$878,570, the debenture debt of the corporation on the 31st December, 1909, being \$13,092,000.

That with the rapid development of the Dominion, the port of Montreal will advance with even greater strides than in the past, there can be no possible doubt. Last year, say the Commissioners,