

To the High Commissioner and staff are due my best thanks for the able assistance I have received in the discharge of my duties.

I have the honor to be Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN W. DOWN,

Canadian Government Agent, Bristol.

The Honourable
The Minister of Agriculture,
Ottawa.

PROPOSED CANADIAN MAIL ROUTE.

In my report last year I touched on the superior advantages of Bristol as a mail station. Lately there has been an active correspondence in the local papers on the subject, which has had the effect of arousing the Chamber of Commerce, who passed the following resolution at a meeting of the Council of the Chamber on 13th November, 1889:—

“That the Council of this Chamber, gladly recognising the more spirited policy that has of late governed the action of the Docks Committee, as evidenced by the decision to provide an experimental coal-tip, and in many other ways expresses its profound conviction that the time has now arrived when, as speedily as possible, the Avonmouth Dock should be made available for the reception of the largest class of Atlantic passenger steamers; that this Council are fully aware that this work cannot be accomplished without incurring a considerable expenditure, involving as it inevitable does, the extension of the entrance lock and the construction of a low water pier; but that they are of opinion, that such outlay is abundantly justified by the prospect of attracting to our port one or more of the largest and swiftest lines of Atlantic steamers.

“That this Council, therefore, respectfully and earnestly urge the Dock Committee to take such measures as may be necessary for the lengthening of the dock by 100 feet, and by the providing a pier, which shall, at the lowest state of the tide, have a minimum of 30 feet of water; and thus fulfil the conditions declared to be essential by one of the leading steamship companies.

“That this Council are all the more deeply impressed as to the urgency of this scheme because of the appearance of Milford Haven as a competitor for the Atlantic passenger trade.

“That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Chairman of the Docks Committee.”

The resolutions which have been passed by the Bristol Chamber of Commerce with regard to the pressing need at Avonmouth for accommodation for very large steamers, and the action taken already by the Docks Committee, warrant the expectation that an effort will soon be made to carry out the works necessary to place Bristol in line with the great ports. The work of making provision for the Atlantic liners at Avonmouth is a matter of great importance. The trade of the future will not be done in small or slow vessels, and every day's delay in providing accommodation which the larger vessels need is an injury to the best interests of the port. The present Docks Committee has shown a determination to favour a forward policy, and if adequately supported it may be expected that it will undertake to carry out something analogous to the programme set forth in the resolutions of the Chamber of Commerce. This includes the lengthening of the lock of Avonmouth Dock by 100 feet and the construction of a pier, by the side of which there will always be 30 feet of water. At present the lock space is quite inadequate. At the City Docks the lock is 350 feet long; the length of the Portshead lock is 444 feet, and the lock at Avonmouth is 454 feet. Not one of these locks will accommodate the large vessels in which the best class of passenger traffic is now carried on. There is plenty of space in front of Avonmouth Dock gates to extend the lock to the dimensions suggested, or even further, without interfering with the channel of the river. And there are probably no engineering difficulties to prevent the construction of a low water pier.