

the city is still paying seven per cent interest on a small part of its debt, namely on \$587,600, contracted in 1868, and on \$50,000, of loans floated in 1876 to 1879, which will terminate in 1901 to 1904. The six per cents, which date from 1875, are all due in the next three years and amount to \$492,400. A round amount at five per cent. totalling \$2,729,534, is due between 1903 and 1909. But the big item of all is \$11,936,867, which was floated at four per cent. between the years 1881 and 1896, and falls due between 1921 to 1923. A million of forty-year bonds was floated at three and a half per cent. in 1893, and the sum of \$7,008,000, at three, between 1888 and 1890. These also have a long time to run. To have come down in rate from 7 per cent. to three, in thirty years, is a reduction of interest that must have seemed out of the question to financial men thirty years ago. But according to the opinions of the shrewdest financial authorities on this continent the low rates have come to stay with us for at least twenty years.

It is of interest to learn what revenue the city of Montreal has to depend upon. We find in another part of Mr. Dufresne's preliminary report that a total of \$8,078,889 was actually received in 1898, of this, \$1,710,901 consists of "assessment of 1898 and arrears;" and \$778,008 of "water rates of 1898 and arrears." The business tax of that year brought in \$261,047, and interest earnings of city funds were \$44,488. The only other large items in the list are market revenues \$76,190 and police licenses, \$78,546. Private butchers' stalls bring in \$13,407; recorder's court fines \$13,961; innkeepers' and grocers' certificates, public weighers, boiler inspection, cattle fees, etc., add small sums to the rest. The eight items whose amounts are specified above thus yield \$2,976,543, and besides them, is the city's percentage of the Montreal Street Railways receipts, which amounts to \$58,951. The dozen or fifteen smaller headings in the list of revenue bring in only some forty-three thousand dollars.

Nearly a third of this revenue of \$8,078,000 is required to be paid out for interest on borrowed money. Thus, the cost per annum of what is termed the Old Consolidated Debt is \$929,766, made up as follows :

\$ 7,008,000	at 3	per cent. a year costs.....	\$210,240
1,000,000	" 3½	" " " "	35,000
11,936,867	" 4	" " " "	477,474
2,729,534	" 5	" " " "	136,476
432,400	" 6	" " " "	25,944
637,600	" 7	" " " "	44,632

\$23,744,401

Costs per year \$929,766

Probably not far from four per cent. is the annual rate on the \$2,255,600 of new obligations added to the consolidated debt, which means an additional outlay of \$90,000, making the cost to Montreal of interest on her debt for 1898 not less than \$1,019,000. The average rate of interest on the consolidated debt is, according to above table, 8.915 per cent.

IRON AND STEEL SHIP-BUILDING IN CANADA.

SECOND ARTICLE.

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Last week we called the attention of our readers to a paper by Mr. Carmichael of New Glasgow, on Ship-building and Ship-owning, and gave some extracts from it. The perusal of this paper afresh has gone far to convince us that portions of the Atlantic Coast of Canada are especially adapted for iron and steel ship-building, because close at hand are to be had not only the iron and the timber, but the nautical as well as the mechanical skill that is so essential for the purpose. Resuming our extracts, we

repeat what the writer of this interesting paper says, viz., that "it is idle to ask whether we [in the Maritime Provinces] can build steel ships—we have built them.' Whether we can compete in the matter of cost is the crux of the whole discussion. Mr. Carmichael has already, he says, adduced reasons for believing that we can compete, and successfully. He makes light of the fact that ship-plates are not made in Canada, urging that they can be bought in Pittsburg and landed in Nova Scotia as cheaply as the Clyde ship-builder can obtain similar material at his door. If we can ourselves make them by and by, all the better. "The best way to insure that they will be made here is to begin to build ships." There is a ring of resolution about this that we like. Here is a man who is not disposed to let "I dare not" wait upon "I would"—who is not hampered by any dread of failure when he thinks the ground clear before him. And he has offered to demonstrate his faith by works, for it was his firm which tendered for the construction of a steel ferry boat for Halifax and very nearly obtained the contract in competition with a Clyde builder. And he persists in thinking that "a small class of steel boat can be built here as cheaply as it can be done in Scotland."

But we are reminded that ship-building cannot be discussed apart from ship-owning. It is the Canadian traders who wish to use the ships that can determine whether the building of them is to go on in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. There might be, Mr. Carmichael says, a score of ship-yards fully equipped, extending along our shores from Cape North to the Bay of Fundy, and "not a ship could be built, so long as our people are content to allow even their own timber to be carried by Englishmen and Norwegians." Have we ship-owners, or would-be ship-owners, who will give to enterprising builders the chance to show what can be done in steel ship-building in Canada? A partial answer to the question of market here for ships made of metal is supplied by the St. John Sun, which declares that "if steel ships could be built at St. John or New Glasgow or any other home docks at a price to compete with British-built ships, the market is here." And that journal proceeds to cite the case of a St. John shipping firm, which for years has been giving an order for a new steel ship every few months, until it now has a fleet of eight or ten large steamers, built of course in Great Britain. These presumably it finds profitable. Other firms, in Nova Scotia, have likewise been investing in steamers, with success. But Mr. Carmichael urges that a class of smaller steamers, say from 800 to 1,500 tons capacity, are equally profitable, for an enormous fleet of such vessels is being operated in the West Indian, the Central American and the South American trade, chiefly by Norwegians.

The West Indian and the Central American markets, it is contended with undoubted force, are markets which belong much more naturally to Canada than to Norway. "We are a maritime people," says Mr. Carmichael, "and have not been afraid in the past to send ships all over the world. Why do we not take up a trade that is near at hand and which our experience as ship-owners enables us to handle to the best advantage? The Americans have neglected it just as we have done." Now it is of very great importance to remember that while the Norwegians have had the most of their modern iron and steel ships built in England or Scotland, they are beginning to build a considerable proportion of their tonnage *at home, in Norway*. Years ago these hardy Northmen built their own wooden ships, and sailed them, all over the world; then, later, they became the chief purchasers of old Canadian wooden ships, a vast number of which are now running