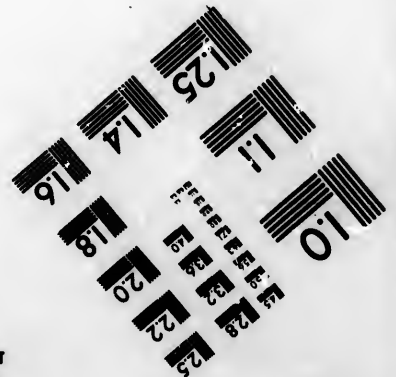
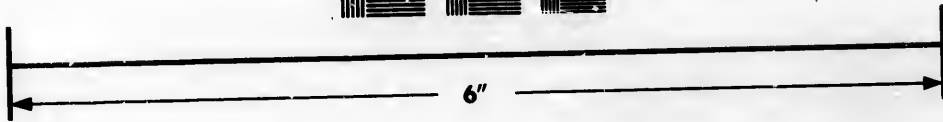
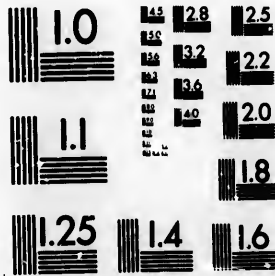


**IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**



**Photographic
Sciences
Corporation**

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503

12.8
12.5
12.2
12.0

**CIHM/ICMH
Microfiche
Series.**

**CIHM/ICMH
Collection de
microfiches.**



Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions / Institut canadien de microreproductions historiques

10
01

© 1984

Technical and Bibliographic Notes/Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

Coloured covers/
Couverture de couleur

Coloured pages/
Pages de couleur

Covers damaged/
Couverture endommagée

Pages damaged/
Pages endommagées

Covers restored and/or laminated/
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée

Pages restored and/or laminated/
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées

Cover title missing/
Le titre de couverture manque

Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées

Coloured maps/
Cartes géographiques en couleur

Pages detached/
Pages détachées

Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)

Showthrough/
Transparence

Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur

Quality of print varies/
Qualité inégale de l'impression

Bound with other material/
Relié avec d'autres documents

Includes supplementary material/
Comprend du matériel supplémentaire

Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/
La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distortion le long de la marge intérieure

Only edition available/
Seule édition disponible

Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/
Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.

Pages wholly or partially obscured by errata slips, tissues, etc., have been refilmed to ensure the best possible image/
Les pages totalement ou partiellement obscurcies par un feuillet d'errata, une pelure, etc., ont été filmées à nouveau de façon à obtenir la meilleure image possible.

Additional comments:
Commentaires supplémentaires:

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	12X	14X	16X	18X	20X	22X	24X	26X	28X	30X	32X
						X					

The copy filmed here has been reproduced thanks to the generosity of:

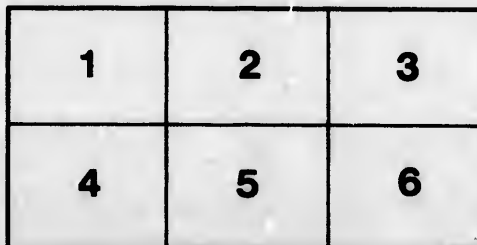
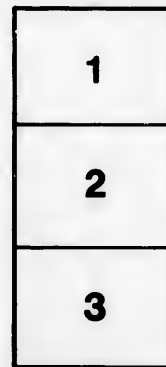
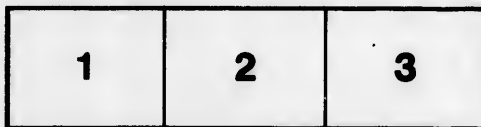
Library of the Public
Archives of Canada

The images appearing here are the best quality possible considering the condition and legibility of the original copy and in keeping with the filming contract specifications.

Original copies in printed paper covers are filmed beginning with the front cover and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression, or the back cover when appropriate. All other original copies are filmed beginning on the first page with a printed or illustrated impression, and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression.

The last recorded frame on each microfiche shall contain the symbol \rightarrow (meaning "CONTINUED"), or the symbol ∇ (meaning "END"), whichever applies.

Maps, plates, charts, etc., may be filmed at different reduction ratios. Those too large to be entirely included in one exposure are filmed beginning in the upper left hand corner, left to right and top to bottom, as many frames as required. The following diagrams illustrate the method:



L'exemplaire filmé fut reproduit grâce à la générosité de:

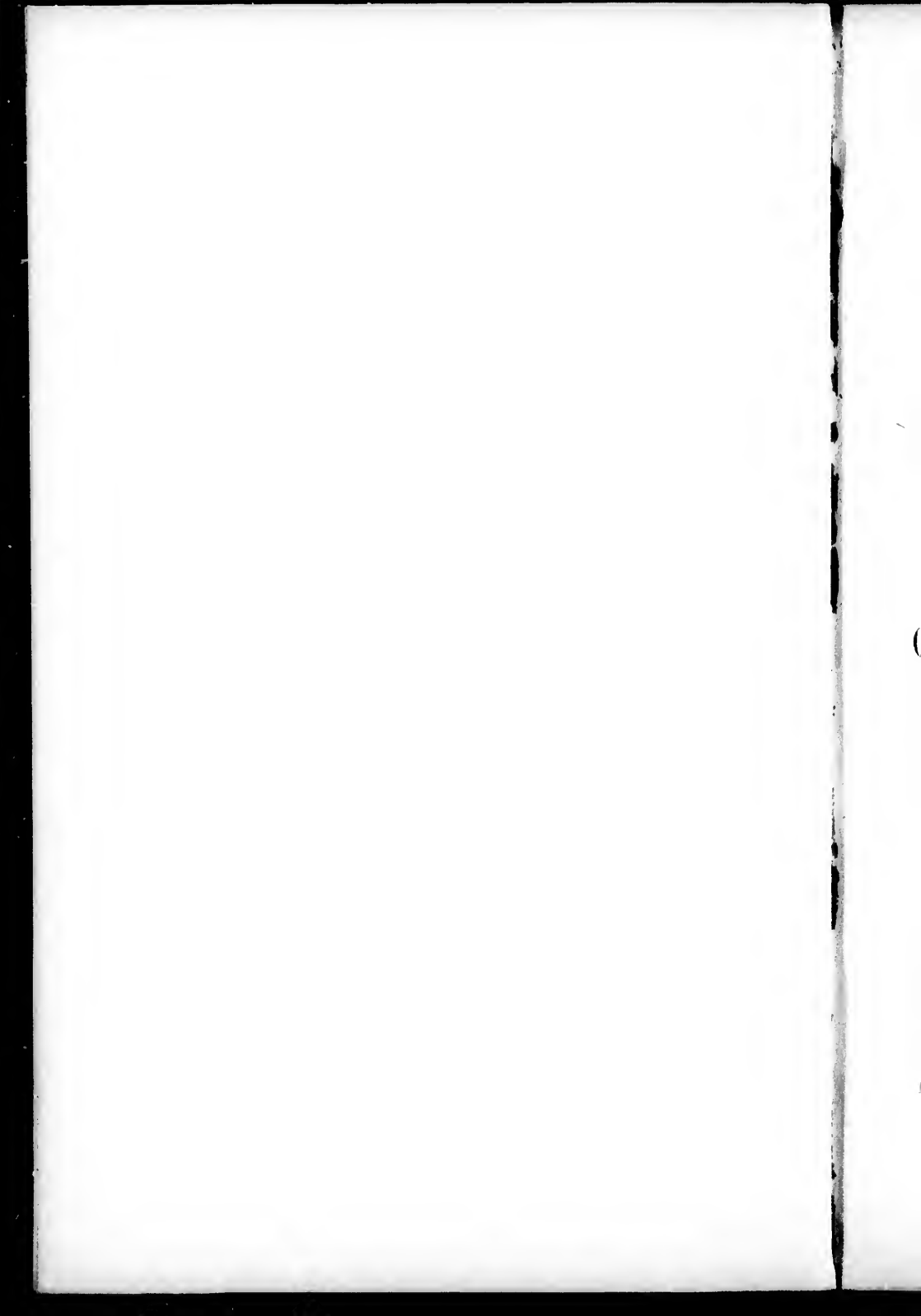
La bibliothèque des Archives
publiques du Canada

Les images suivantes ont été reproduites avec le plus grand soin, compte tenu de la condition et de la netteté de l'exemplaire filmé, et en conformité avec les conditions du contrat de filmage.

Les exemplaires originaux dont la couverture en papier est imprimée sont filmés en commençant par le premier plat et en terminant soit par la dernière page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration, soit par le second plat, selon le cas. Tous les autres exemplaires originaux sont filmés en commençant par la première page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration et en terminant par la dernière page qui comporte une telle empreinte.

Un des symboles suivants apparaîtra sur la dernière image de chaque microfiche, selon le cas: le symbole \rightarrow signifie "A SUIVRE", le symbole ∇ signifie "FIN".

Les cartes, planches, tableaux, etc., peuvent être filmés à des taux de réduction différents. Lorsque le document est trop grand pour être reproduit en un seul cliché, il est filmé à partir de l'angle supérieur gauche, de gauche à droite, et de haut en bas, en prenant le nombre d'images nécessaire. Les diagrammes suivants illustrent la méthode.



A LETTER

FROM A

MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRADE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

QUEBEC HARBOUR COMMISSION.

QUEBEC:

PRINTED BY THOMPSON, HUNTER & CO., No. 26. ST. URSULE STREET.

1861.

M

S
point
man
and
the
den
no
del
ind
to c
our
wh

I
ene
form
to h
dis
sibl
as t
mod

A LETTER

FROM A

MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRADE,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

QUEBEC HARBOUR COMMISSION.



SOME two years have now elapsed since the Commissioners appointed under the "Act to provide for the improvement and management of the Harbour of Quebec," commenced their labours, and it must, at least, be said that they have applied themselves to their task with a zeal most unmistakable, with a spirit of independence most decided, and with an evident determination to show, at no very distant period, some solid and tangible result of their deliberations and large pecuniary outlay. For this zeal, for this independence, and for this sincerity, we have certainly every reason to congratulate ourselves on the excellent selection, from amongst our fellow-townsmen, made by the Government, in the gentlemen who have been appointed to the important posts of Commissioners.

But while we are bound to recognize the great activity and energy which the Harbour Commissioners have shown in the performance of their duties, it by no means follows that we are bound to bear testimony to the prudence or the judgment which they have displayed in the selection of a plan of operations. It may possibly be that, led away by too great a zeal to distinguish themselves as the originators of a novel and perfect system of wharfage accommodation, by an independence which does not sufficiently seek, nor

weigh the merits of the suggestions and views of what may be termed outside parties, and by too nervous a desire to display their sincerity by pointing at an early date to the completion of some magnificent undertaking, they may commit themselves to a scheme which will prove to defeat the objects they have themselves in view, and carry into execution a system of so called improvements which may hereafter be condemned as a great mistake, when it is too late to remedy it, and when, too, the port may be saddled with heavy increased charges to provide for the pecuniary burden they have imposed upon it.

When we look at what the Harbour Commissioners have already done, and reflect on the vigorous preparations they are making to push on their works with every possible dispatch, it cannot be questioned, that the time has fully arrived when those who feel any real interest in the future prosperity of Quebec, should consider most seriously whether the proposed scheme of improvements is the best which could be adopted. It would be obviously unjust to wait, without remonstrance, until the result of any error which may now be committed be patent to every one, and then condemn the present Commissioners for having made it. To avoid this, if there be any question as to the foresight and prudence of the Commissioners as displayed in their scheme of contemplated improvements, the subject should at once be fully publicly discussed and ventilated. This is, it seems to me, a duty which we owe both to the Commissioners themselves and to our interest in the trade and prosperity of the port.

Now there is, I conceive, a very great doubt whether the plan which the Harbour Commissioners propose is the best, considering the circumstances, which they could adopt, and I can only attribute the fact that, as yet no decided public protest has been made against it, by some one far better able to grapple with the question than myself, to the conjecture that those of our citizens, who should have the matter most at heart, are really so ashamed of the miserable condition of the harbour accommodation that they are unwilling to dwell upon it publicly, and feeling, as we all must, the utmost confidence in the integrity and sincerity of the Commissioners, are content to leave to them the extremely arduous and critical duty of improving matters.

Now, as the public weal should be a matter of the utmost possible consideration to every good citizen, and for which he is, to a certain extent, responsible, there is at least something rather cowardly in this leaving the entire responsibility to others. If, in the administration of public bodies, any one thinks that the real interest or welfare of his fellow citizens has been overlooked, it is not only his privilege, but, I would suggest, his duty, to represent his views, and it is in this spirit that I propose, in this letter, to consider

first, how far the Harbour Commissioners are carrying out the main object for which they were incorporated, and then, whether the result of the scheme of improvements which they propose to effect would not be to retard rather than hasten the real prosperity of the city.

For many years past the wharfage accommodation of Quebec has been found to be but ill adapted to the requirements of our trade. The deep water privileges appear to have been conceded originally to the possessors of small properties on the shore, who erected in front thereof wharves of greater or less dimensions at all conceivable angles and depths of water, which, however well suited to their own particular business views at the time, and to the average size of vessels some thirty years since, are, even in their present somewhat improved state, when the number and size of the vessels visiting the port are considered, but a sorry makeshift for any thing like proper wharfage accommodation.

Roused at length by the taunts of strangers visiting the city, by the complaints and grumblings of ship masters and ship owners, and by the energetic rivalry of the Montrealers, who, the wish being father to the thought, boasted that their port "*was the head of the salt water navigation,*" (!) as well as by a chimerical idea that they would get the whole of the "carrying trade of the west," if only their wharfage accommodation were improved, the Quebecers determined to "see about it," and after talking the matter over for a year or two, came to the conclusion that unless the wharf property in front of the city became vested in some public body, it was quite useless to talk of any permanent improvement. The frontage of the different wharves varies considerably, and except in a very few instances, no large vessel can lay at a wharf without encroaching on the rights of the adjoining proprietor, besides preventing smaller craft from making use of the side berths. Even supposing that certain owners were willing to accommodate their neighbours, themselves and the public welfare, by selling their wharves to any holders of the adjoining property, who might have the desire, the energy, or the pecuniary means requisite to purchase the same, no real benefit would result, since the erection of any wharves, or the placing of any ships on the water frontage of the numerous small streets which lead down to the river side, would be acting in direct contravention of the existing harbour regulations.

Under these circumstances it was considered desirable to bring the matter before the Council of the Board of Trade, who, after due discussion, addressed the Executive on the subject, and allude thereto in the Report submitted at a general meeting, on the 6th August, 1856, as follows :

"To obviate the annually increasing complaints of the insufficiency of wharf accommodation for the discharge of inward cargoes, the Council applied to the

Executive to name three or more Commissioners to report the best measures to be taken to extend the wharfage front by building upon the vacant Government lots, for acquiring property for the purpose, and to ascertain on what terms present proprietors will sell and place the whole river front under the management of the Harbour Commissioners, to be hereafter appointed and empowered by an Act of the Legislature to raise the necessary funds to carry out the plans adopted, and levy such rates for the wharfage as the Governor in Council would approve. This application is still under the consideration of the Executive, from whom the Council trust it may receive favourable attention."

Whether this application received favourable attention, or any attention at all, must remain a matter for conjecture, since it certainly does not appear that any action was taken upon it by the Executive, and the Records of the Board of Trade do not show that their proposal was ever entertained. It appears, however, that as the Council of the Board of Trade could not obtain the appointment of a commission to consider the best measures to be taken to place the whole river frontage under the charge of Harbour Commissioners "to be hereafter named," they determined to forego any such consideration of the matter, and shortly afterwards we find them requesting Mr. Simard, M. P. P., to introduce a bill into the Legislature to incorporate "a *Harbour Commission for the Port of Quebec*," (whatever that may be,) due care being taken in a formal resolution on the subject, to show that they had "no connection whatever with the opposite shop," by stipulating expressly that "each side of the river must bear its own burdens," — a tremendous blow, this, at the energetic schemes of Messrs. Grand Trunk, Forsyth, & Dock Company, which doubtless, these gentlemen must have duly felt.

At a general meeting, on the 6th April, 1857, the Council report :

"Your Council considering that great improvements are required in the Harbour, for the increased and annually increasing wants of the trade, and which can only be made on a comprehensive and extended scale, memorialised His Excellency in Council on the subject, and are glad to perceive that a bill has now been introduced into Parliament for this object."

Apparently this was not exactly what the General Board desired, for at the same meeting a resolution was carried :

"That it be an instruction to the Council now elected to petition for the appointment of Harbour Commissioners for the *Port within the limits of the City of Quebec*, with a view of obtaining the requisite funds from the municipal loan fund, to enable them to purchase property and construct suitable wharves and floating slips for ocean and other steamships, &c."

This new Council appears to have vigorously continued the memorialising system, for on the 5th April, 1858, we find them still singing the old song :

"That a memorial had been sent to Legislature for an Act to provide for the management and improvement of the Harbour of Quebec, and the appointment of Commissioners for that purpose, with certain privileges and advantages, and under all necessary restraints and restrictions."

A new Council is then elected who communicate to the Board,

at a quarterly meeting on the 4th August, 1858, the glad news that,

"Having followed up the application for a Harbor Commission for the Port of Quebec, a bill for that purpose was introduced into the Legislative Assembly by the senior member for the city, suggestions offered by the Council on some of its details were adopted, and it has since become law, as 'An Act to provide for the improvement and management of the Harbour of Quebec,' and only now awaits the appointment of Commissioners to carry it into effect."

Soon afterwards the appointments of Commissioners were made, and in the spring of 1859, the Board commenced its sittings.

This, then, is the history of the formation of the Harbour Commission, and from it we may gather one or two facts which it is as well to bear clearly in mind; first, that for a Harbour Commission at all we are indebted entirely to the representations and exertions of the Board of Trade; and next, that the object the Board had in view was clearly to place the whole of the city wharves on the River (*i. e.* the St. Lawrence) front, under the ownership and control of a Board of Commissioners, to whom were to be accorded certain privileges and advantages, with a view of improving the accommodation afforded by these wharves on a comprehensive and extended scale, and to separate for the future the public interest in providing proper wharf accommodation in the Harbour from the private interests of any individuals.

Immediately on commencing their duties the Harbour Commissioners seem to have entered into a negotiation for the purchase of the property known as "Oliver's Wharf." There is probably no great reason to doubt the prudence of this purchase itself, or to find fault with the price paid, even though it be a considerable advance on the price at which it was acquired but a very short time previous to the resale to the Commissioners; but it is, I think, somewhat a matter for regret, that the first transaction of the Commissioners should be a sort of "family affair," to relieve an exploded Railway Company, represented, I think I am justified in saying, by two of the Commissioners themselves, of a property which must have been a source of embarrassment to them, and yielded no manner of revenue whatever.

Possibly carried away by the enthusiastic representations and irresistible arguments of the gentlemen with whom they had been brought in contact in this purchase, the Commissioners seem next to have decided that the position of the wharves and business part of the city on the St. Lawrence was a "great mistake," and that the proper field for *their* operations was the mud at the mouth of the St. Charles. Accordingly, we find them, in April, 1860, submitting an elaborate plan of a proposed breakwater at the mouth of the St. Charles, to the consideration of the Board of Trade, who, at a quarterly meeting, report

"That the President having asked the opinion of the Council on the subject

was recommended to oppose the construction of the breakwater, and to endeavour to obtain a survey of the wharves, piers, and docks, from Oliver's to Martin's wharf, both inclusive, with a view of ascertaining the best means of extending and improving the accommodation for shipping between these two points."

If anything were wanted so show the object for which the Board of Trade sought and obtained the introduction of the Harbour Commissioners, it is to be found in the manner in which they oppose this scheme of a breakwater, and, after considering the question anew, return to the old position of the advisability of endeavouring to obtain a survey of the present admirably situated wharves, with a view of extending the accommodation they afford. If any proof is wanting of the apparent determination of the Board of Commissioners to carry out their own scheme independently of the suggestions and wishes of that portion of our citizens represented by the Board of Trade, to whom the subject is of the greatest moment, it is to be found in the fact that the President of the Board of Trade did not obtain from the Commissioners the survey sought for, that the enlargement and improvement to the wharf at Pointe à Carcy has been actively undertaken, without any reference to the opinion as its utility, of the Board of Trade, and that instead of evincing any desire to consult the wishes of this Board, the Commissioners have permitted the circulation from their office of photographic copies of an elaborate Plan, prepared by their own Engineer, of the "proposed improvements of the Harbour of Quebec," in which the locale is entirely confined to the mouth of the St. Charles river, and in which the objectionable breakwater, (with an alteration, to be sure, in its direction,) forms a most prominent feature. It is worth remarking that while many public offices have been favored by copies of the plan, none has as yet been presented to the Board of Trade.

It may be urged with some show of plausibility that it does not follow, as a matter of course, that the Harbour Commissioners shall father any extravagant Plan which their Engineer may conceive, and that it is unfair to pronounce as theirs, a Plan upon which they may not have agreed and which as yet, they may not even have formally taken into consideration. It is of course impossible, and moreover unnecessary, to state positively that the Plan embodies the definite scheme of the Commissioners; on the contrary, it seems certain that, as yet, they have not absolutely committed themselves to it. It would be worse than useless to wait until the Commissioners have finally made up their minds on matters of detail, advertised for tenders, and commenced the works, before calling their prudence into question, and it is precisely for this reason that I am anxious at this particular moment to draw public attention to the proceedings of the Commissioners, with a view of criticising and discussing fully what, I would suggest, are their evident intentions.

By evident intentions I mean the general scheme which the Commissioners propose to themselves to adopt, and that this general scheme is the carrying out of extensive wharf and warehouse accommodation at the mouth of the St. Charles, I do not think there is any room for doubt. A plan has been prepared by the Engineer to the Commissioners, and apparently circulated from their office. The details of this plan and, in connection therewith, the glorious intentions of the Harbour Commissioners, have lately been dwelt upon by the public press in several laudatory editorial articles, the materials, at least, of which have been furnished by some Official connected with the Commission, and it is not to be supposed that unless the representations contained in these articles were substantially correct, any gentleman connected with the Commissioners would have set them forth as such, or the Commissioners themselves have suffered them to pass uncontradicted. It is evident from the fact that they submitted a plan of a proposed breakwater to the Board of Trade, that at an early stage of their labours, the attention of the Harbour Commissioners was occupied by a projected scheme of improvements at the mouth of the St. Charles, and it is also fair to presume that the attention of their Engineer has been bestowed upon that point to which the Commissioners have directed it. That this attention *has not* been seriously directed to the existing wharf accommodation on the river front, seems clear from the fact that the Board of Trade has not been put in possession of the survey which they requested some twelve months ago. That it *has* been seriously directed to the mouth of the St. Charles river, seems equally clear from the elaborate plan of improvements the Engineer has published, and the fact that he has commenced the construction of the steam dredge which is to play so conspicuous a part in the working out of his scheme. It would seem, therefore, that the Harbour Commissioners have either selected the mouth of the river St. Charles, as the scene of their future labours, or they have, as yet, selected none at all. That they have selected none at all it is idle to suppose, since it is impossible to believe that the eminently cautious, and practical business men who compose the Harbour Commission, would expend so much time, discussion and public money, as they have done, on the improvements of the wharf at Pointe à Carey, without considering and keeping steadily before them the part it was to play in some comprehensive scheme of future works.

The conclusion is thus forced upon us, that it is the intention of the Harbour Commissioners to increase our wharfage accommodation by extensive improvements at the mouth of the St. Charles, and if there be any fairness in what I have adduced, the conclusion is no less forced upon us that, by so doing, they would act in direct opposition to the opinion of the mercantile community, as repre-

mented by the Board of Trade, and to the express objects for which they were originally incorporated.

Let us now consider what effect the carrying out of such a scheme would have upon the trade and prosperity of our port.

There are three main objects, which I would suggest it should be the aim of any improvement of our wharf accommodation to embrace,—first, that of giving the utmost possible facilities to the existing trade of the port; next, that such facilities should possess, so to speak, a quality of elasticity, so as to render them capable of being extended hereafter, should an increase in the trade at any time render it desirable; and, thirdly, that these results should be obtained in such a manner as to impose the least possible pecuniary tax upon either the shipping for which such facilities are afforded, the city generally, or any particular class of our citizens. These three objects must be kept in view, as it were, simultaneecusly and any scheme based upon the consideration of only one of them, without a due regard to the other two, would, I conceive, ultimately prove an injury rather than a benefit to the port.

It is not to be imagined that the Harbour Commissioners, incorporated for the purpose of remedying an existing state of things, are satisfied to occupy themselves in deciding what they will do by and by, when the general claims of the St. Lawrence to be the "great natural highway," etc., and the particular claims of Quebec to be the "great transshipping port," shall be universally acknowledged. True, provided they would do so without any expenditure of public patience or public money, there seems no great reason why they should not indulge in such speculative ideas, they would at least do no great harm, but they would do no good, and as to do good is undoubtedly the earnest desire of the Commissioners, we can only suppose, that agreeing that "if 'twere well 'twere done, 'twere well 'twere done quickly," they have decided to "do something" immediately, and that something must either have in view the accommodation of the existing trade, the future trade, or of both. Let us suppose that it be the existing trade. It may be possible that by dint of money, the steam dredge, patience, and a successful triumph by the Engineer of "mind over matter," the Commissioners may succeed in obtaining a certain number of safe mooring berths, suitable depth of water, and arrangements for loading and discharging ships with the utmost possible dispatch, but if a perfect system of wharfage facilities be held to include, as it undoubtedly must, the imperative condition that these requisites be furnished in a situation the most central and best adapted to the business requirements of the trade, I maintain that the locality selected by the Commissioners precludes any possibility of its fulfilment, and renders their whole scheme comparatively useless.

Taking the new Custom House as a starting point, the general shipping trade is at present accommodated along the river front to say "l'Anse des Mères," from which point the various Coves provide for the particular wants of the Timber Trade with which it is, doubtless for well considered reasons, not the intention, apparently, of the Commissioners to interfere. To suppose that the intention of the Harbour Commissioners is to provide accommodation for the existing trade, must also involve the supposition that there is no existing accommodation whatever, and that having gravely decided that the splendid natural advantages which the river front affords, and the excellent facilities for harbour accommodation which many points between the Custom House and l'Anse des Mères possess, are utterly inadequate for their purposes, the Commissioners have come to the determination of establishing a new harbour altogether, and that they have but merely to excavate the mouth of the St. Charles some twenty feet, and build wharves, warehouses and elevators, to relieve the overcrowded business part of the city altogether, of the nuisance of ships with its attendant annoyances, and remove it to a proper distance eastward of the Custom House—where it shall be connected with the city only by a drawbridge. Now, unfortunately for this theory, it happens that our merchants have been in the habit of congratulating themselves that the shipping is, by the present arrangement of the harbour, brought as near as is possible to the centre of that trade to which it administers, and, however perfect the accommodation of the Commissioners might be, they might not see the enormous advantages of its being situated a mile or two distant from their doors, of its being afforded on an extensive arrangement of wharves, some 100 feet or so wide, surrounded by water or mud on all sides and exposed to all vicissitudes of weather, and of its been approachable only by a "suitable" drawbridge, which, practically speaking, must be open half the day to allow the numerous batteaux and schooners with hay, bricks, boards, deals and firewood, to avail themselves of the facility of the South Channel of the Little River. True, according to foreign representation, our Quebec merchants are the last men in the world to see their own real interests, but as the Harbour Commissioners have not yet contemplated any improvement by condemning them as useless, and substituting for them an importation of the right kind of men from Montreal, the Welland Canal, or some other model seaport, (for most certainly if the St. Charles be "the right place," these are "the right men,") I am sadly afraid, in the meantime, that the cautious prudence and the sincere regard for his own business convenience, of every mercantile man in the city will materially prevent the success of any such intended scheme of the Commissioners, and stamp their attempt to improve matters an extensive failure.

As a purely financial question also, the matter does certainly not present any more cheerful an aspect. To succeed, any scheme of the Commissioners to provide at the St. Charles River for the existing trade, not only demands that the existing trade shall go there, but also when there it shall pay such rates for its accommodation as shall, together with the income granted to the Commission from annual payments for deep water privileges granted heretofore, provide for office expenses, salaries, &c., repairs, and interest of money, as well as the working expenses. The existing revenue will probably not do more than pay the office expenses and salaries of the officials. It would follow, therefore, that any system of wharf improvement must be self-supporting. Now such a scheme must result in one of three consequences: either vessels will avail themselves of any facilities which the Commissioners may offer, and pay any rate therefor which the Commissioners may impose, in order to meet their various liabilities—or the Commissioners will entice the shipping to their wharves by putting themselves in direct competition with the present wharfholders, and reducing their rates to any point at which the latter may choose to stop—or the shipping will not employ the wharves at all. If, in considering the first of these results, we suppose, for the sake of argument, that despite the instructions, the advice, or the interests of their consignees, the masters of the ships trading to the port, overcome by any extraordinary facilities (notwithstanding the locality) which the Commissioners may offer, persist in placing their vessels at the Commissioners' wharves, and pay, cheerfully, any fabulous amount requisite for the Commissioners to "pay their way," it follows clearly that the present wharfingers will be ruined, and have the satisfaction, moreover, of paying heavy annual amounts to the Commissioners who ruined them, for the "privilege" (in the shape of deep water allotment) of being allowed to be ruined. Such a result is the utmost success that the Commissioners could hope for, and granting the almost impossible contingency that they attain it, since it would be folly to contend that the prosperity of our trade must involve the ruin of one class of citizens, and place burdens and inconveniences on the mercantile classes generally, such a "success" must, I contend, as bearing on the general trade and prosperity of the port, be regarded as an utter failure. If, on the other hand, the Commissioners decide to compete with the present wharfholders in the imposition of charges on shipping and on goods, the result may be easily predicted, for, as it is well known to what extremes a man will be driven before giving way, and our wharf proprietors generally are well able to stand a pretty hard contest, the shipping would gain the advantage of extremely cheap wharf accommodation at the joint expense of the unfortunate holders of Harbour Commission debentures, and

the present wharf proprietors, a position of things which certainly is not calculated to promote the interests or credit of Quebec. Lastly, supposing that ships would not go to the new wharves at all!—But folks are always most “touchy” when their pockets are concerned, and out of respect for any future Boardholders, I must forbear.

The question as to whether it be the purpose of the Harbour Commissioners to provide immediate accommodation for a future trade, is one which concerns more properly the particular interests of any holders of harbour debentures, than the general interests of the port; but as such a question must involve the supposition that the Harbour Commissioners have decided to postpone the task of providing suitable wharf accommodation for the present wants of the trade, and have resolved to devote their labours to the provision of supposed future requirements, it may be worth while to devote some attention to the consideration of it.

If we ask whence is this future trade to be derived? we are morally certain to receive for reply a deluge of words in which the expressions “great natural highway!” “enormous western trade!” “Quebec must ultimately become, &c.,” “paltry timber trade,” and “want of enterprise or public spirit,” are rained on us most pitilessly, till by putting up the umbrella, as it were of “Pointe Levey,” “Grand Trunk,” “Montreal,” “Mississippi,” or “New York,” we obtain some partial shelter. The argument in which these expressions which serve as so many watchwords, or party rallying cries are wrapped, is simply this: that the western country ought to receive and deliver all her supplies by way of the St. Lawrence, and that Quebec ought to be the head quarters for the distribution; and, furthermore, that it will be so. It does not seem necessary to dwell on the probability of Quebec obtaining the import trade of the west, since it may be assumed that while so many of our vessels arrive in ballast, if the advantages of Quebec for this portion of the western trade separately were so decided and conspicuous, our keen business importers in the west would long since have availed themselves of them, and secured the advantage of the almost nominal rate of freight at which many of our vessels would consent to carry their goods. The western export trade is the ambition of Quebec, and if this were obtained, there is little reason to doubt that the import trade would follow as a natural consequence.

The export trade of the west may be said to consist of cotton, flour and grain. Some sanguine stockholders in the Grand Trunk Railway (and, strange as it may appear, there are some such even now) have conceived the possibility of their line carrying cotton from the west to Pointe Levey and Portland, and they certainly deserve infinite credit for such an ingenious conception; but as the St. Lawrence has not yet laid any decided claim to the cotton

trade, I do not think Quebec proper need trouble herself much about it. We need only concern ourselves, therefore, with the grain trade, including therein the flour trade, to which it is closely allied. For this grain trade the St. Lawrence is undoubtedly a "great natural highway," but where to? To a market; and here lies the whole question. There are two markets for anything: the "home" and the "foreign," and an over-abundance in the first induces the seeking of the latter. As the western grain trade is supplied both from the United States and Canada West, and as exchanges in grain are freely made between the two countries, it will simplify the matter to define the "home market" as the demand for consumption on this side, and the "foreign market" the demand for consumption on the other side of the Atlantic.—The produce of the west, after being stored at some convenient spots—as Chicago, Milwaukie or Toronto—for transmission to the different branches of this "home market," after supplying the local demands, is passed on, so to speak, to supply the demands of more distant localities. Thus a considerable quantity is forwarded from such points as Oswego or Buffalo for transmission by one highway, the canals, to New York, and the remainder avails itself of another highway, (the "natural one"), the St. Lawrence, to Montreal; at which places, viz., New York and Montreal, the head-quarters of the "home market" may be said to exist. The fact that these two places are the head-quarters, cannot be considered a matter of accident, but may be said, so far as the "home market" is concerned, to arise from their natural position as the furthestmost points from which conveniently to distribute supplies over a very large district, either producing no grain itself at all, or in quantity quite insufficient for its wants. At New York and Montreal are to be found merchants whose business it is to encourage grain to the market, and to buy or sell the same, either on their own account or on commission, to which business, resulting in the profitable distribution of the grain, they are content to devote their energies and the large amount of capital requisite.

After the demand of the "home market" has been supplied, it usually happens that a quantity of grain remains on hand, for which a "foreign market" must be sought. This surplus varies extremely in different years. Sometimes there is no surplus at all available for the foreign market, while in other years, as last year, the quantity is very considerable. Basing their calculations upon either a scarcity, and consequent high prices on the other side of the Atlantic, or the probability of a superabundance and consequent low prices on this side, the foreign merchant, or some speculator in this country, proposes to introduce some of the surplus western produce into a foreign market. The foreign merchant naturally sends his orders to the head quarters of the home trade, and the specula-

tive shipper to the foreign market is naturally found to be some merchant whose connection with the trade at head-quarters enables him to select to the best of his judgment some favorable time or turn in the market at which to operate. For the purpose of fulfilment of foreign orders, or of operating on their own account, merchants at head-quarters prepare to ship grain to the other side of the Atlantic. With a natural desire to keep the whole of the business in their own hands, they endeavour to do so direct from their own doors. They find this feasible, and thus New York and Montreal become equally head-quarters for supplies for the home and foreign markets.

Now, to become the transshipping point for this foreign trade, Quebec must either relieve Montreal and New York of it, it must act as Agent, so to speak, for these places, or it must secure for itself any future increase in it. How is this to be done ?

To relieve Montreal and New York of the existing foreign trade, we must effect an entire separation in the localities from which the foreign and the home trade are supplied, and so long as the supply for the former is dependent upon the present great fluctuations in the quantity available after the demands of the latter have been supplied, this has been found impracticable. The scheme has been tried of late years, by at least one firm, with an unusual energy and ample means, but it has been abandoned, doubtless, for well considered reasons, amongst which the absence of stationary elevators and warehouses, probably ranked as very trival. Any grain forwarded direct to Quebec must practically either be shipped to foreign market, or sent back again to some point at which it becomes available for the home market. At present the foreign trade in grain is, *per ipse*, extremely uncertain, and eminently speculative, for the reasons that foreign orders are often based upon limits at which it is impossible to operate, and that it is seldom, about once only in four or five years, that foreign prices will afford any margin for profit in speculative shipments from this side. If this be the case when the trade is conducted by parties situated at the head-quarters of the grain trade, how much more would it be likely to be so were the trade conducted by parties at Quebec, situated at a distance from such head-quarters, and subject therefore to all the extra risks and inconveniences attendant thereupon. Were any attempt made, therefore, to draw the existing foreign trade from New York and Montreal to Quebec, their seems no reason to think that it would be successful.

In considering the question of whether Quebec will hereafter act as Agent for other places in forwarding grain for them to the foreign market, we must keep in view the business axiom, that no man will employ an agent to act for him in transacting any business for him which he can do equally profitably and con-

veniently himself. So far as New York is concerned, the probability that her merchants will ever ship grain across the Atlantic, *via* Quebec, is extremely remote. Apart from the disadvantage of the St. Lawrence being only open six months in the year, and from all considerations of nationality and mercantile convenience, we must bear in mind the fact that vessels trading to New York depend, for their profits, mainly upon their inward freight, and have generally, at the discharging, the alternative of accepting an extremely low rate for grain, &c., or "shifting port," and seeking more remunerative rates at Quebec or elsewhere. This low rate of freight is practically found to more than compensate for any greater expense which may be incurred in the transmission of grain by the Canals to New York, than by the St. Lawrence to Montreal, and this is the reason why heavy shipments of grain are made, oftentimes from New York, when Montreal is unable to send forward a single bushel. Were the export trade of New York to increase so as to afford the certainty of employing, satisfactorily, the whole of the shipping seeking charters there, it is probable that vessels seeking freight at many other United States ports would be enticed to New York. If this did not prove sufficient then from the easier access thereto, and from the extensive commercial relations existing between the two places, there is no reason to doubt that the New York merchants would first seek the aid of Montreal.

I may pause here to answer a question which may be raised, whether if the vessels trading to New York depend mainly upon the freight to that place, Quebec could not aspire to obtaining the carriage of that portion, at least, of such cargoes as is intended for the Western States. It is not necessary to dwell at length upon the natural desire of the New York merchants to keep as much control as possible of the goods they furnish to their Western customers, and to import them by any means they think best calculated to suit their own or their country's interests. It is sufficient to reply that if such a scheme be feasible, abundant opportunity to carry it out is afforded in the numerous vessels coming to this port in ballast, and that it would be far wiser to employ these in carrying goods intended for the western states, than occupy oneself in the vain endeavour to entice fresh vessels into the service by offering them the chance of a grain charter, or failing that, a cargo of timber as a bait. When Quebec succeeds in snatching from New York the export trade, and not before, may she expect to secure the import trade. If the chances of the one are so remote, how much more so are they of the other.

With respect to Montreal there is no reason to suppose that her merchants will avail themselves of the services of Quebec until absolutely compelled thereto by the want of sufficient shipping or harbour accommodation for their purposes. Montreal possesses

at present quite sufficient facilities for the export trade which she enjoys, and it is difficult to believe that any facilities which Quebec could afford would enable Montreal shippers to transact their present business more economically or more satisfactorily. The Montrealers have a most overweening conceit of their own little port, and look down upon the Quebec timber trade with the sovereign contempt of the fox in the fable; and it cannot, therefore, be imagined that they will part with any portion of their trade until they find it impossible, on an emergency, to tempt Quebec vessels to their port for grain, or until their export trade outgrows all accommodation which the port can possibly afford. That this latter is not likely soon to be the case seems evident, from the fact that the sanguine and enterprising citizens who contemplated the immediate construction of docks in Montreal, were content to accept the dictum of a celebrated engineer, whom they consulted on the matter, "that it was time enough to talk about constructing docks when they had a trade to employ them." When that time comes it is to be hoped that common sense and practical business views will have returned to these worthy citizens, and that they will be content to avail themselves of any facilities Quebec may then offer, rather than peril the prosperity of their little port by the introduction of any so extravagant and absurd a scheme as that, from which the never-to-be-too-much-commended self-denial of an eminent engineer, has for this time saved them. On the point of agency then, we may look forward to Quebec being employed by other places as a point from which to ship grain to the foreign market, when the export trade shall have arrived at such a magnitude as to render any attempts of these places to "do their own shipping" profitably entirely nugatory. Even at the present rate of increase in the production of grain, this must occupy a considerable time. It cannot take place immediately, Quebec must therefore be content to look forward to it as an inevitable consequence, and "bide her time," even though any absurd jealousy and schemes of the Montrealers may for a while succeed in procrastinating it.

Let us now imagine Quebec in the proud position of not endeavouring to hasten the march of events by stooping to seek favours, in the mean time, from any one. She scorns to be any body's agent, but resolves to bring forth merchants of her own who shall secure the future export trade, and ship it triumphantly from her own port, from her own warehouses, filled by her own elevators, steeped in the holds of her own line of propellers! It is really delightful to glance at such a picture, but it will scarcely stand the steady gaze of criticism. In contemplating it we must bear in mind that grain once in Quebec must be shipped, and that, practically speaking, it has passed all the limits of the home market.

It is evident, then, that before such a picture can be realized, the home and the foreign trade must be entirely separated, and to realise it successfully (that is profitably) the trade must have arrived at such a magnitude as to enable us to say with certainty that we can at least spare a stated quantity of grain every year, as well as the probability, or possibility as the case may be, that we could spare so much more. In this respect it must become assimilated in some measure to the present condition of our timber trade. Even then some enterprising and wealthy merchants must be forthcoming in Quebec to make themselves masters of the situation. The union of these desiderata, though "a consummation devoutly to be wished," must necessarily be a work of time, a work which I am afraid will be postponed to some future day, which this generation will scarcely witness.

On such a sea of doubts and chances must the Harbour Commissioners, in any contemplated scheme of immediate accommodation for future requirements, be content to risk its success. Doubtless there are people sanguine enough to contend that there is an enormous western trade waiting at our doors, and that some "encouragement" only is required in order to obtain it, and the Commissioners may imagine that this "encouragement" consists merely in the provision of what, after all, are secondary matters, wharves, elevators, and warehouses. In other words, that they have merely to bid their engineer prepare an elaborate pitfall by excavating the mouth of the St. Charles, Goodness knows how many feet, fence it round by substantial wharves, and bait it with "suitable elevators and warehouses," wait patiently till the western trade tumble in, and then "stand by all hands" to secure it. If such in reality be the scheme of the Commissioners, it needs no prophet to tell us that the result must be—An enormous amount of money yielding no revenue whatever—A property utterly valueless except in connection with the possibility that it may, if kept in proper repair, be made available at some distant day for some possible requirements of the trade—A set of disappointed, and consequently angry, holders of harbour debentures clamorously petitioning the Legislature to tax the Province generally, or Quebec in particular, with the payment of their eight per cent., on the ground that their money has been spent on "public improvements," quite as much so at least, as the money expended in deepening Lake St. Peter,—and the utter forfeiture of Quebec to any claim to common sense or common business prudence.

It remains only to consider the possibility that the scheme of the Commissioners contemplates the construction of proper wharf accommodation at the mouth of the St. Charles, both for the existing trade and a future trade, waiting only the "encouragement," which they propose to afford, to call it into existence. If the

application of such a scheme to the wants of the existing trade, and a supposed future trade, respectively, be attendant with so enormous a risk of complete failure, it would seem to follow that any combined application of it to both objects merits, as it were, a double condemnation, and it becomes unnecessary to enlarge on the subject.

Thus I have endeavoured to show that in the contemplation of their scheme of so called improvements, at the mouth of the St. Charles River, the Harbour Commissioners are departing altogether from the purpose for which they were originally incorporated, and that any such scheme, on its own merits, is fraught with extreme danger to the real interests and prosperity of our port. As it would be somewhat unfair, however, to condemn such a scheme in so wholesale a manner, without suggesting an improvement, it may be as well, in conclusion, to consider briefly a few of those points to which, I conceive, the attention and energies of the Harbour Commissioners may be more advantageously directed.

Returning, for a moment, to the point from which we set out, I contend that the real task assigned to the Harbour Commissioners is that of obtaining the possession and control of the existing wharves on the river front, with a view of improving and extending the accommodation these wharves afford, on some comprehensive scale, rendering them better fitted to the requirements of our trade; and to this task they should immediately apply themselves, with all that zeal and activity for which they stand so conspicuous, yet with all that prudence and proper business caution which ought to characterize the actions of so important a trust. It would not be advisable, for instance, that because the Commissioners have made up their minds to acquire the wharves on the river front they should rush at the scheme impetuously, and expend the whole of their £300,000 sterling, in purchasing property, and then find themselves suddenly at a stand still for further means wherewith to improve the property they have acquired. It would obviously be more prudent to purchase three or four of the present wharves, situated, say, immediately above the Custom House; and then, after testing and confirming the practicability of any scheme of improvements thereon, to acquire the adjoining property, and extend their plan, till, by degrees, proper wharf accommodation be afforded along the whole river front to the general trade of the port, till it meet the particular accommodation existing for the timber trade at a point where the line of coves commences. In the prosecution of such a scheme, when the Commissioners arrive at that point at which all their present means be exhausted, should the improvements they have made be found practically to answer the requirements of the trade, and to be financially successful, there is no reason to doubt that fresh means, ample enough for the completion of the task, will

be cheerfully accorded. If on the other hand, which is extremely improbable, the scheme should be found not to answer, it would be obviously time to abandon any idea of extending it.

Our cove-holders have lately discovered that the introduction of a simple steam engine, for the purpose of moulinetting their timber, practically nearly doubles the accommodation their coves previously afforded; and they wonder "how it was they never thought of it before!" This lesson should not be lost upon the Harbour Commissioners; for it is evident that, while the present facilities of loading and discharging vessels are afforded at the utmost rate of some eighty to one hundred tons a day, if we can, by a proper introduction of steam power, increase this accommodation to the rate of two hundred tons only a day, the capacity of the present wharves would be practically doubled. This subject must, however, not be considered in connection with the miserable expedient of a small moulinetting engine, tubs, yard-arms, "guys," and "tripping lines," but with proper steam derricks, with travelling carriage leading directly into a warehouse, or on to the wharf, as may be desired, on the plan which has been found to answer so well at New York, Portland, and other places. If the Commissioners persist in their endeavour to "encourage" the grain trade, and are convinced that the obstacles which the great rise and fall of tide present to the introduction of elevators in Quebec, though no doubt easily overcome in theory by the talents of the engineer, will not prove materially to prevent their practical success, let them bear in mind that one elevator and a warehouse capable of containing 120,000 bushels of grain, if such could be placed immediately at the river's edge, would probably be sufficient to answer the present requirements of even the Montreal foreign trade; and let them try the experiment here, on one of the wharves, at first on a small scale. They would, at least, have the chance of filling their warehouse, in case of either the Montrealers suffering from a scarcity of ships or any Quebecker suffering from a plethora of capital—unless, indeed, the other side of the river interfered; for, disguise the fact as we may, we may rest assured that, eventually, "South Quebec" and the Grand Trunk Railway will play a very considerable part in the game of "facilities."

The main features of our general shipping business, as distinguished from the timber business, are the importation of salt, coal, &c., on ships' account, a small quantity of miscellaneous imports for local wants, and a larger quantity for transhipment to places in Upper Canada. Any system of warehousing or storing must have chiefly in view the accommodation of the former of these, so as to prevent, in future, the necessity of selling salt or coal at a ruinously low rate when an easterly wind brings a rush of vessels to the port, and the scarcity of river craft, and the absence of

storage facilities, make it almost a question for shipmasters to decide, whether they had not better throw their cargo overboard altogether, than submit to the vexatious and expensive delay which this position of matters renders necessary. To be effectual, any storage facilities must ensure the utmost possible dispatch in discharging these vessels, and they must be cheap, for shipmasters generally are philosophical enough to rather "bear the ills they have, than fly to others that they know not of;" and it is probably only when the cost of discharging by steam at a wharf, together with say a month or two's storage on the cargo, but equals the cost of the present delay and imperfect facilities for discharging, that any improved facilities for storing which the Harbour Commissioners may offer will be employed for either coal or salt. With reference to the imports for local requirements, and those intended for transmission to the west, as regards the former, the importers will doubtless desire to remove them to their places of business as quickly as they are discharged, leaving only a comparatively small proportion for sale "ex-store." As regards the latter, the forwarding trade is certainly not likely to be encouraged by imposing upon the goods any unnecessary expenses and delay by warehousing, be they never so small. In this sense, then, the less warehousing accommodation employed, the better for the trade; and this is the true secret why so many warehouses on the river side remain empty, for inconvenient in many respects though they may be, if they were a necessity they would certainly be employed.

Considered as a financial question, there is no reason to doubt that the scheme here proposed to the Harbour Commissioners would yield very satisfactory results. The wharf property generally commands at present a rental which yields a very good interest on its estimated value. In addition to this lessees are always to be found ready enough to undertake to pay this rent, and trust to the present very imperfect facilities to pay their working expenses and make an income by way of profit on the undertaking. If by any comparatively simple and judicious means the accommodation which these wharves affords become doubled, it would seem to follow that the Harbour Commissioners having a monopoly of the whole river front, the value of the property also becomes doubled. The Harbour Commissioners would at all events possess a property of a distinct and recognised value to represent their liabilities, which would, to say the least, contrast most favorably with the fictitious and imaginary value of any property they might create at the mouth of the St. Charles. It may be said that the Commissioners might be deterred from obtaining a monopoly of the wharf property by the extravagant demands of present proprietors. The act of incorporation provides for this, and the mode in which arbiters are to be appointed, and the general interest felt in the success of the scheme,

sufficiently protect the Commissioners from the rapacity of any wharf proprietors of—*imposing appearance*, even were any such to be found, which is extremely doubtful.

The subject of the Harbour Commissioners is one of paramount importance to every one who feels any interest whatever in the progress of Quebec. Any false step now made will seriously jeopardise the chances of her future advancement. Let, then, the Harbour Commissioners emerge from the cloud of mystery in which their act permits them to obscure themselves, and come out freely into the mercantile world, and seek the suggestions and co-operation of their fellow merchants. Let the *ex-officio* members of the Commission bear in mind that they represent the Board of Trade and the citizens respectively, and that it is their duty to watch with a jealous care over the interests of their constituents. Let the Engineer to the Commission remember that the greatest engineering feats of even Brunel himself are those which yield the least practical commercial result—that is, profit; and recollecting that in all commercial schemes, “can it be done?” should wait upon “will it pay?” endeavour to emulate the extraordinary self-denial of his Montreal confrere, to which allusion has already been made. Let the holders of harbour debentures reflect upon the fact that a day must assuredly come at last when the Legislature will refuse to stand sponsors to every abortive scheme of incorporated bodies, and will refuse to acknowledge the force of the conclusion—that because it is a great failure it must therefore be voted a “public improvement.” Lastly, let the citizens generally remember that the true interests of the city are materially involved in the success or otherwise of any scheme which the Harbour Commissioners may adopt. We may then feel confident that the scheme at the mouth of the St. Charles will be quietly “shelved,” and that the incorporation of the Harbour Commission will prove a real boon to Quebec, in resulting in the accomplishment of such a scheme of permanent improvement as will administer to the welfare and increase the prosperity of the port.

QUEBEC, February 20, 1861.

f any
such

amount
n the
ously
n, the
ry in
e out
nd co-
ers of
rd of
uty to
stitu-
at the
which
; and
one?"
traor-
on has
reflect
en the
cheme
orce of
efore
itizens
erially
e Har-
nt that
quietly
ommis-
accom-
will ad-
rt.

