

OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION ON THE ST. LAWRENCE.

The rapid progress of Steam communication forms one of the most instructive chapters in the history of commerce. Many persons yet alive will recollect Fulton's making the first Steamboat journey between New York and Albany, in 1807; since that time, every port in the world, possessing the slightest pretensions to trade, has become possessed of Steamers; England has come to own a merchant navy of 2,931 steamers, of 901,062 tons; France, of 407 steamers, with 129,777 tons; the United States, 1,083,302 tons, chiefly inland and coasting steamers, and even Canada has, owned and registered in the Dominion, 1,335 steamers, of 45,766 tons.

It is often to be remarked that special kinds of trade or industry centre in special districts. Thus, the little town of Yarmouth, in Nova Scotia, is the port which owns most large sailing ships of any in the Dominion. And so it seems that Montreal is the head-quarters of steam navigation and ownership in Canada, notwithstanding the superiority in position which Quebec would seem to occupy. It remains to be seen whether, on the completion of the Intercolonial Railway, Halifax or St. John will be able to enter into rivalry with it. The energy which Montreal has shewn in this particular, certainly entitles her to the greatest credit.

It will be in the recollections of most Canadians that the shallowness of Lake St. Peter, in which there were only 11 feet at low water, at first so impeded navigation between Quebec and Montreal, that all ocean steamers had to convey part of their cargo between these places in lighters. The deepening of the channel was discussed in the Legislature for ten years, and in 1841, the Board of Works was authorized by act to commence operations. Up to 1846, some \$400,000 had been expended without important results, but a change in the management of the works and in the principle on which they were conducted being made, a channel was completed by the end of 1851, 75 feet wide and 2 feet deeper than the natural channel. By 1853, it was widened to 150 feet, with an extra depth of 4 feet. The Hon. John Young, and his fellow harbor commissioners, then decided to secure a 20 feet channel, a work of which the magnitude may be imagined when it is considered, that 30 miles of the old route had to be abandoned, and a new one on the southern side of the river adopted. In 1853, the channel had been made 3 feet deeper than in 1853, that is, 18 feet deep at low water. In November, 1865, the channel was 300 feet wide at the bottom, and the *Ocean Monarch* was taken through from Sorel to Quebec (there being no vessel at Montreal) drawing 19 feet, 8 inches, when there was the unusually low water of only 10 feet 6 inches on the Lake St. Peter flats, since which time difficulties in connection with the management of the work have interfered with its continuance, so that although it is said the 20 feet channel exists, it has not been made available, and the one used is the old 18 feet channel completed in 1850. It is only just to say that the cost of this great improvement has been assumed by the Government, and now stands in the Public Accounts at the sum of \$1,164,235.

The first Company to commence running a regular line of Steamers from Great Britain to Montreal was chartered on the 23rd of May, 1853, the act being entitled "An Act to Incorporate *The Canadian Steam Navigation Company.*" It was composed of Messrs. Robert McLean, Donald McLarty, Robert Lamont, John Carmichael, John Laird, John Holme, of Liverpool; Robt. Gillespie, jun., Thos. H. Brookings, Robert Carter, Matthew H. Chaytor, of London; Patrick Henderson, of Glasgow; and Thos. Ryar, Luther H. Holton, and J. B. Greenshields, of Montreal. They were authorized to raise £250,000 stg. (with power to increase to £1,000,000) for the purchase and maintenance of steamships or other vessels, for the transport of passengers and merchandize from the ports of Montreal or Quebec, and any port or place in Great Britain, and to buy or rent such wharves, warehouses, &c., as might be necessary for their use. The Canadian Government granted them a subsidy of £19,000 stg. per annum for carrying a fortnightly mail between Montreal and Liverpool, and the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway supplemented the amount by £4,000 stg. and the city of Portland by £1,000, on consideration of the steamers running to Portland during the winter months. Although the regular trips were to commence in 1854, the "*Genova*" of 350 tons was dispatched from Liverpool, and arrived at Montreal on the 10th May, 1863. She was succeeded by the "*Lady Eglinton*," (335 tons) which made two trips.

In the same year, the "*Sarah Sands*," formerly running from Liverpool to New York, was sent from the former city to Montreal, consigned to Messrs. Gillespie, Moffatt & Co., arriving in October. The total steam tonnage at Montreal for 1853, was therefore—

3 trips by vessels of the Canadian Steam Navigation Co., -	tons 1020
1 to Gillespie, Moffatt & Co., -	" 931
4 trips—total tons, -	tons 1951

In 1854, the Company put the steamers "*Charity*," "*Sarah Sands*," "*Ottawa*," and "*Cleopatra*" on the route and five trips were made; the first vessel (the "*Charity*") arriving on the 2nd June. The total steam tonnage of Montreal for this year was therefore 5 vessels—tons 4,652. Fourteen more trips were made during the season, but the vessels only came to Quebec, not ascending the river to Montreal.