

National Harbours Board.*—Prior to 1935 the administration of each of Canada's national harbours was under a local harbour commission, appointed by the Dominion Government and operating under special Dominion statutes. These harbour commissions were financed by the revenues of their respective ports, by the use of their limited borrowing power, and, to a great degree, by loans from the Dominion Government. With the object of bringing these national harbours under unified governmental control, the National Harbours Board Act was introduced and passed at the 1936 session of Parliament, and went into effect on Oct. 1 of that year. The Act was based mainly on recommendations made by Sir Alexander Gibb, noted British engineer with a wide experience in port construction and operation, who was engaged by the Dominion Government in 1931 to undertake a survey of the national port situation in Canada. Prior to the passing of this Act, the Dominion Government had, in 1935, put into effect some of the principal recommendations resulting from this survey. This was effected by the appointment of three senior Government officials at Ottawa to act as Harbour Commissioners of the seven national ports that it was intended to bring under centralized control. This form of administration continued to function until the National Harbours Board Act was passed and the permanent Board was appointed.

The National Harbours Board Act provides for the creation of a Board consisting of three members under the direction of, and responsible to, the Minister of Transport. In legal parlance, the Board is a statutory corporation created as an agency of the Crown and charged with the administration, management, and control of the harbours and properties placed under its jurisdiction. By the provisions of the Act, the powers, rights, and obligations of the former local harbour commissions were vested in the new Board, thus insuring continuity in respect to outstanding rights and obligations.

At the outset, the National Harbours Board was entrusted with the administration of the ports of Halifax, Saint John, Quebec, Three Rivers, Montreal, Chicoutimi, and Vancouver. Since 1936, the port of Churchill on Hudson Bay, the grain elevator at Prescott on the St. Lawrence, and the grain elevator at Port Colborne on Lake Erie, were placed under the Board, pursuant to a provision in the Act that permits the Governor in Council to transfer any harbour or property of the Dominion to the Board for administrative purposes.

The Act gives the Board wide and general powers of management and control. Certain powers are reserved to the Governor in Council, the chief of which is the making of rates and tolls on vessels and goods moving into or out of the harbours under the Board's jurisdiction. Such tariffs of rates and tolls are prepared by the Board after careful study. Recommendations respecting them are made by the Minister of Transport and submitted by him to the Governor in Council; the tariff becomes effective upon publication in the *Canada Gazette*.

The Board operates on an annual budget submitted each year to the Minister of Transport, as required by the Act. The funds of each port must be kept separate and there must be no intermingling or transfer of funds from one port to another. The Minister of Finance is empowered to make advances for working capital not exceeding \$1,000,000 at any given time, such advances being repayable annually. The accounts of each port and the staff handling these accounts are under the direction and control of the Department of Finance, and all revenues received and expenditures made by the Board are subject to audit by the Auditor General of Canada.

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