

**PUBLIC DOCUMENT NO. 11.
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD
OF HARBOR AND LAND
COMMISSIONERS, FOR THE YEAR
1900**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649434244

Public Document No. 11. Annual Report of the Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners, for the Year 1900 by Various

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.
1901.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

REPORT.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners, pursuant to the provisions of law, respectfully submits its annual report for the year 1900, covering a period of twelve months, from Nov. 30, 1899.

From Dec. 1, 1899, to Nov. 30, 1900, the Board has held 234 meetings, has given 296 formal and informal hearings, and has received 159 petitions for license to build and maintain structures and for privileges in tide waters, great ponds and the Connecticut River, to dredge material, to remove material from beaches, and for other purposes.

One hundred and seventeen licenses for structures and privileges in tide waters, great ponds and the Connecticut River have been granted during the year; also 27 permits for dredging, for the removal of material from beaches, and for other purposes.

One hundred and five inspections have been made by the Board at various times of work completed and in progress, under appropriations made by the Legislature, in Boston harbor, on the Commonwealth flats at South Boston, the Province Lands in Provincetown, Connecticut River at Hadley, at Green Harbor, Osterville, Lewis Bay, Lake Anthony, Menamsha Inlet, Witchmere harbor, Scituate beach and Scorton harbor; also of the Commonwealth flats at East Boston, the New Bedford and Fairhaven bridge, North

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River, Pleasant Bay in Chatham, Waquoit Bay and Cuttyhunk harbor; also of the sites of proposed work in tide water, great ponds and Connecticut River, upon petitions and plans presented to the Board; and also of various beaches relative to the removal of material.

Through transactions of the Board there has been paid into the treasury of the Commonwealth during the past year, from rents, licenses and sales of land, the aggregate sum of \$203,560.42.

During the year the Board made 16 new contracts* duly authorized for the expenditure of \$124,181.02.

Sales and leases have been made as follows:—

On June 12, the Board executed a deed for a deed of conveyance from the Commonwealth to James Richard Carter, William B. Rice and Andrew G. Webster, of 43,068 square feet of land on the Commonwealth flats at South Boston, lying between Summer Street, C Street, Fargo Street and B Street, at the rate of \$2 per square foot.

On June 15, the Board leased † to the firm of Curran & Burton, for a coal yard, 267,320 square feet of land on the Commonwealth flats at South Boston, northerly of Summer Street and westerly of and adjoining land of the Commonwealth, leased to the Metropolitan Coal Company; also two pile piers to be built by the Commonwealth in front of said lot, 400 feet long, for a term of five years, from Oct. 1, 1900, with the privilege of renewal for the further term of ten years, at a rental of \$6,750 per year. On Dec. 26, 1900, an agreement was made between the Commonwealth and this firm whereby an additional yearly rental of \$250 is to be paid, in consideration of the extension by the Commonwealth of one of the piers referred to in the lease of June 15, and the execution of certain dredging in connection therewith.

On November 6, the Board executed a deed for a deed of conveyance from the Commonwealth to the firm of Brown & Wales of two corner lots, containing 26,500 square feet, on the Commonwealth flats at South Boston, in the block bounded by Egmont, C, Fargo and D streets, at the rate

* See Appendix A.

† See Appendix B.

of \$1.40 per square foot. This bond also covered the right of purchase from the Commonwealth of two other adjacent inside lots within this block, at the rate of \$1.25 per square foot.

COMMONWEALTH TIDE LANDS.

On February 6, a license was granted to the Edison Electric Illuminating Company of Boston to extend its wharf on Fort Point Channel, in the city of Boston, to the harbor line established by chapter 170 of the Acts of 1880. The Board recommended the payment of \$13,591.05 by this company for the rights and privileges granted in tide-water land of the Commonwealth to be covered by the proposed extension, the area being 8,237 square feet. This amount was determined by the Governor and Council, Feb. 14, 1900, under section 16 of chapter 19, Public Statutes, to be a just and equitable one to be paid therefor. Payment of this amount was made by the company Aug. 9, 1900.

On October 24, a license was granted to the trustees of the Boston Real Estate Trust to extend their wharf on Fort Point Channel, adjoining the northerly side of Congress Street in the city of Boston. The Governor and Council determined, on Nov. 7, 1900, that \$29,373, the amount recommended by the Board, should be paid for tide-water land of the Commonwealth to be covered by the proposed extension, the area being 7,389 square feet. Payment of this amount was made by the trustees Nov. 27, 1900.

The above amounts were paid into the harbor compensation fund for Boston harbor, under chapter 146 of the Acts of 1897, the income of this fund being available for use by the Board in improving Boston harbor.

BOSTON HARBOR.

The attained supremacy of this country in the production of coal, iron and steel, which are the fundamental materials of modern commerce and industry, — the output of coal and iron during the past year having been one-third of that of the world, — inspires confidence in the belief of a great future for the exports of Boston. In twenty years the export

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of iron and steel from the United States has risen from \$14,714,524 in 1880 to \$121,858,344 in 1900. The export of other products is also increasing with great rapidity. During the same period all exports from Boston have grown from \$59,238,341 in 1880 to \$112,195,555 in 1900.

In all this great increase of exports from this country, that of manufactured goods has surprised the world. It is reasonable to expect this yearly growth to continuously advance, and the proportion of it which will be sent abroad from the port of Boston will depend largely upon the accommodations and facilities there afforded. Vessels in the foreign trade entering and clearing from Boston in 1900 aggregated 4,225,000 tons, while vessels in the coastwise trade numbered 21,000 and aggregated 17,000,000 tons.

The consolidation of railroad interests at Boston which has been consummated the past year under legislative authority will not only enlarge the resources and means for convenient accommodation, but is expected to greatly increase the volume of exports. Under these conditions, the improvement of the harbor by widening and deepening its main channels navigable for the large steamships employed in trans-Atlantic traffic becomes an imperative necessity.

Boston has for many years been the second port in importance in the country. The customs revenue collected during the year ending June 30, 1900, was nearly \$19,000,000. The Federal government, in recognition of its value and usefulness, has been and is spending not inconsiderable sums in the improvement of the harbor. At the present time the main ship channel has been excavated to a depth of 27 feet at mean low water, with a width of 1,000 feet from the entrance of the harbor to President Roads, excepting about 250 feet on the southern side between Georges and Lovells islands, where some rocky ledges still exist, although, however, about to be removed.

From President Roads to Constitution wharf a width of 500 feet has been dredged to the depth of 27 feet along the northerly side of the proposed channel throughout its length. In doing this work a ridge of ledge was uncovered extending across the channel at the upper middle. Through this is a cut

250 feet wide has already been made, to the depth of 27 feet, and the balance is being removed as rapidly as possible. The authorities are now at work dredging the additional 500 feet on the south side, in order to give the channel throughout the projected width of 1,000 feet, with a depth of 27 feet.

Long before the anticipated completion of this project, Congress realized that the increased and increasing size of ocean steamships would require still deeper and wider channels. A modified project was thereupon developed, under suggestions having a home origin, for creating a new entrance to the lower harbor through Broad Sound, following the line of the existing channel now used by small craft coming from the east.

This project called for a ship channel out through Broad Sound 30 feet deep and 1,200 feet wide. The necessary authorization was secured, and under an appropriation by Congress at its last session the work is partially done, but will require at least another season for its completion, as dredging cannot progress there in the winter months.

It is estimated that the appropriation already made is sufficient to complete the dredging, but an additional appropriation of \$133,000 (the balance of the amount authorized to be expended on this channel) will have to be made for the removal of the ledges which will be uncovered by the dredging.

So rapid has been the increase in the size and draft of the ocean steamships of late, that before the contract relating to Broad Sound Channel for a depth of 30 feet and a width of 1,200 feet was signed, a demand arose for still greater enlargement. Members of this Board, accompanied by leading merchants of Boston, in April last, visited Washington, appeared before the committee on rivers and harbors of Congress, and requested that steps might be taken for securing to Boston a ship channel from the wharves to the sea, having a depth of 35 feet and a width of 2,000 feet. The act of Congress approved June 6, following, provided for a survey of Boston harbor, with a view to providing channels 2,000 feet wide, or such width as may be necessary, and 35 feet

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deep, from the Navy Yard at Charlestown and the Chelsea bridge and Charles River bridge to President Roads, and from President Roads through Broad Sound out to the ocean.

In the scant time which has elapsed since the passage of that act, the United States engineer officer for this district has caused surveys and estimates to be made and forwarded to Washington, in order that the committee on rivers and harbors at its December sitting may have before it the data for determining the appropriation necessary to be inserted in the river and harbor bill, which it is expected will become a law before the expiration of the present session of Congress, on March 4, 1901.

Should Congress make provision at its present session for carrying out the above project for enlarging the channels in Boston harbor, by approving a channel 1,500 feet wide and 35 feet deep from Broad Sound to President Roads, and 1,200 feet wide and 35 feet deep up to the first bridges, at a cost of about \$8,000,000, there is every reason to believe the work will begin during next summer and progress as rapidly as may be until finished. Such a work would require several years for completion, but, for convenience, may be prosecuted in longitudinal sections so as to give the necessary depth of 35 feet throughout the entire length of the project at a comparatively early date, while the full width proposed for the accommodation of commerce will be sure to be realized later. We may, therefore, with confidence look forward to the ultimate completion at this port of channel facilities adequate to the growing demands of commerce.

In thus making provision for the growth of the port by improving the navigable channels of the harbor, Congress will be pursuing the established policy of the government, in carrying out which hundreds of millions of dollars have already been appropriated, whereof \$4,080,027.10 only has thus far been appropriated for the improvement of the harbor of Boston. It would be trenching on the sphere of duty of the national government for the Commonwealth to undertake expenditures for improving the main ship chan-