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TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE BOARD OF
HARBOR AND LAND
COMMISSIONERS**

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OF THE

BOARD OF HARBOR AND LAND
COMMISSIONERS.

FOR THE YEAR 1905.



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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 1905, covering a period of twelve months, from Nov. 30, 1904, being the twenty-seventh annual report of the Board since its establishment by chapter 263 of the Acts of 1879.

From Dec. 1, 1904, to Nov. 30, 1905, the Board has held 211 meetings, has given 305 formal and informal hearings, and has received 161 petitions for license to build and maintain structures and for privileges in tide waters, great ponds and Connecticut River, to dredge material, to remove material from beaches, and for other purposes.

One hundred and six licenses for structures and privileges in tide waters, great ponds and Connecticut River have been granted during the year; also 48 permits for dredging, for the removal of material from beaches, and for other purposes.

Forty-eight inspections have been made at various times by and under the direction of the Board, of work completed and in progress; also of sites of authorized work, under appropriations made by the Legislature, relating to: dredging operations in Boston harbor; improvements on the Commonwealth's flats at South Boston; the reclamation of the Province Lands in Provincetown; protective works on Connecticut River at Agawam, Hadley, Hatfield and West Springfield; Bass River in Beverly; wall and jetties at Stony Beach in

Hull; Stage harbor and Bucks Creek in Chatham; jetties and channel at Menamsha Inlet; jetties and channel at Lake Anthony; Vineyard Haven harbor; jetties and channel in Bass River at South Yarmouth; Lewis Bay in Yarmouth; East and West bays at Osterville; Cotuit harbor; Witchmere harbor in Harwich; Apponagansett harbor; Herring River in Harwich; Nantucket harbor; Cuttyhunk harbor; Paskamansett River in Dartmouth; site of proposed breakwater in Revere; Nashawena Island; also upon petitions and plans presented to the Board of the sites of proposed work in tide waters, the location of wrecks and obstructions to navigation; various structures built under licenses from the Board; sites of alleged dumping of material into tide waters; town boundary survey work; State boundaries.

Through transactions of the Board there has been paid into the treasury of the Commonwealth during the past year, from rents, licenses, sales of land and other sources, and credited to the Commonwealth's flats improvement fund and the harbor compensation fund for Boston harbor, the aggregate sum of \$133,563.42.

During the year the Board made 13 new contracts,* involving the estimated expenditure of \$72,741.88.

BOSTON HARBOR.

Combined activity is essential to success in the competitive business of the present day. The greatness of the port of Boston is dependent not only on deep and commodious water ways, but upon the volume of business that can be attracted hither.

While the railroads are and must continue to be the great originators as well as transporters in enlarging the volume of exports, the merchants are the ones upon whom rests the responsibility of enlarging the volume of imports. It is a truism to assert that these volumes have interdependent trade relations.

The twelve months ending Nov. 30, 1905, show a value at the port of Boston of imports amounting to \$106,993,964,

* See Appendix A.

and of exports, both domestic and foreign, of \$90,715,904, which together sum up \$197,709,868. Of this, the total foreign exports were \$839,628.

During the same period the coastwise tonnage of vessels entering and leaving the port was as follows, viz.: 5,618 vessels of all kinds from southern ports registered a gross tonnage of 6,262,217, and 3,322 vessels from eastern ports 2,530,415, or a total of 8,792,632; while the foreign net registered tonnage of 165 American vessels was 219,361 and of 1,349 foreign vessels was 2,559,528, or a total of 2,778,889.

A new steamship line, between this port and China, Japan and Singapore, or rather an extension of the service that has heretofore been plying to New York, has been established, and the first steamer arrived here November 24.

The Elder-Dempster line has announced the establishment of a line between Melbourne and Boston, with monthly sailings, but the first steamer has not as yet left Australia.

Our coastwise lines have been increased by the addition of the Maine Coast Transportation Company, which operates two steamers between here and ports of the State of Maine.

Of course freights, whether outward or inward, are relatively less at the port where the steamships can find a return cargo. Boston should be developed as a great entering and forwarding port for the cities of the mid-sections of the country. Importing merchants of the interior should be generally and continuously informed of the advantages in the way of speedy and courteous custom house examinations, economies in handling and facilities for inland transportation at reasonably low freights which may be enjoyed by patronizing this port.*

While the Federal government is deepening and widening the harbor channels and the Commonwealth is improving the anchorage basins and increasing the wharf accommodations, the merchants should persevere in providing the business, that nothing may be done in vain, and that working together the largest results may be accomplished concurrently with

* It is worthy of note that importations through the port of Boston during the fiscal year of 1906 increased 24 per cent., as against a gain of 13 per cent. at New York and about 12 per cent. at Philadelphia.

the greatest economy toward holding the chief port in New England as the second in importance in the country.

Foreign commerce is a great educator, and the more of it we try to get and have to deal with, the earlier shall we begin to discover some of the problems essential to be understood in order to guide it in a desired direction.

Unwise legislation may interfere with its rapid development. Antagonistic interests may procure the establishment of obstacles. Uncontrollable differentials may assist in the diversion of exports to harbors less safe and easy of access and farther from foreign ports of destination. But the port of Boston is unalterably fixed in its physical and geographical relationship to the vast interior of this continent and in the path of easy transit to the eastern hemisphere.

What can be done by the Legislature of the Commonwealth and the merchants of greater Boston should be, in determining the right influences of legislation, both State and national, which, by aiding and not obstructing the laws of economical and commercial growth, may shape advancement on lines of safe and sure progress, while avoiding the errors of ignorance.

A decade ago a commission was appointed to investigate the wants of Boston for improved docks, wharves and terminal facilities. In January, 1897, the commission made its report to the Legislature, recommending on the part of the Commonwealth public ownership of a portion of the fore shore; the building of a great pier with a proper avenue of approach; the improvement of the anchorage basins; changes in the railroad tracks and terminals at East Boston; also the improvement of the harbor channels and the building of a large dry dock at the Navy Yard by the Federal government.

The recommendations were timely; already had begun the change in the draft and carrying capacity of transatlantic steamships, which marked the advance in requirements for channels, docks, basins and piers far in excess of any demands hitherto made.

A comparison of sizes of the mail steamships built by the Cunard Company within the last forty years may be interesting and instructive:—

	1885. "Java."	1884. "Umbria."	1905. "Carmania."
Length,	337'	500'	672' 6"
Breadth,	42' 6"	57' 3"	72'
Depth,	27' 7"	39'	52'
Gross tonnage,	2,697	8,127	19,524
Indicated horse-power, . .	2,650	14,500	21,000
Speed in knots,	14	19.5	19

The weight or displacement of the "Carmania" when loaded to a draft of 33' 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " is calculated to be 30,918 tons. It is said that there is no indication at present that transatlantic steamships have reached their ultimate development as to size, and the recent application of the epoch-making steam turbine for power in place of the reciprocating engine surely adds a new and uncertain factor in any calculations.

To anticipate the requirements of the largest class of vessels, the harbor channels had to be widened and deepened, and the projects for improvement by the Federal government were made to keep pace with the movement. The economic advantages of larger vessels became so conspicuous as to extend their influence to the coastwise carriers, and the coal and lumber schooners increased beyond the five mast limit to six and even to one of seven masts, with a loaded draft of 28 feet when carrying 8,000 tons of coal. This increased draft led directly to a desire for greater depth of water when lying at anchor, and thus the anchorage basin project off Bird Island flats became an early necessity; and where formerly that well-known anchorage area had but an average of about 13 to 18 feet at mean low water, there is at present a depth of 30 feet over the area thus far completed. By the time the existing projects of both the State and national governments are carried out, others will be needed to enable the accommodations and required facilities to keep pace with the demand and maintain the port as one of the first order.