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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD
OF HARBOR AND LAND
COMMISSIONERS. FOR THE
YEARS 1897**

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BOARD OF HARBOR AND LAND COMMISSIONERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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FOR THE YEAR 1897.

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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 1897, covering a period of twelve months, from Nov. 30, 1896.

Every year brings an access of business of a character which needs the personal attention of the commissioners. Every new subject matter over which the Board is given jurisdiction, or with reference to which an examination and report is required, brings with it a multitude of lesser requirements, such as the visitation of localities, conferences with individuals, examination of documents and answers to inquiries from others, which take up time.

In systematizing the business of the office, the Board has found it convenient to have a return day, on which parties petitioning may come in and be heard, either in person, or, as often happens, by counsel, whereby the hearings are now and again extended by continuances, in which questions of law and fact are presented and argued, and have to be finally determined by the Board.

In addition to its other duties, the Board conducts a bureau of information, relative to matters over which it has charge, and the inquiries relating thereto are repeated and constant. In order not to disappoint the public and to insure a regular and systematic performance of all its duties, the Board has substantially daily sessions for five days out of the week, and during all the business hours of each day it endeavors to have at least one of its members present.

4 HARBOR AND LAND COMMISSIONERS. [Jan.

In the past year one hundred and sixty-five formal hearings have been given, at which one hundred and eight petitions for licenses to build and maintain structures, and for privileges in tide waters and great ponds, were heard and determined; and of these, one hundred and four were granted, one withdrawn and three denied.

Of the hearings not given at the commissioners' rooms in the State House, two were given at Cotuit and Osterville on Sept. 9 and 10, 1897, under chapter 483 of the Acts of 1897, for the purpose of personal acquaintance with the locality and people, and of listening to the testimony of all parties interested in the construction of a channel from Osterville Bay to Vineyard Sound.

On Oct. 22, 1897, a hearing was given by the Joint Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners and State Board of Health, at Green Harbor, under the provisions of chapter 495 of the Acts of 1896 and chapter 98 of the Resolves of 1897, relative to the restoration of Green Harbor in Marshfield.

On Oct. 29, 1897, a hearing was given in Springfield, under the provisions of chapter 82 of the Resolves of 1897, relative to the improvement of the navigation of the Connecticut River.

All other hearings were given by the Board in Boston.

In addition to the licenses granted on petitions which have to be accompanied by plans and recorded in the various registries of deeds, the Board has granted sixty-six permits (for convenience so called) not requiring registration, some of which were accompanied by plans and required a formal hearing, whereas others were of a nature such as could be treated informally, without prejudice to the rights of third persons.

During the year the Board has made seventy-six inspections of premises necessary to be visited before granting petitions and privileges, and also for the sake of determining if the Board's directions had been faithfully carried out and authorized appropriations had been rightly and economically expended.

Among other places visited have been Provincetown, Gay Head, Chatham, Cotuit, Springfield, Beverly Farms, Agawam

and Holyoke. For the purpose of a personal inspection of the Connecticut River, the Board proceeded by water from Springfield to Holyoke on one occasion, and on another from Springfield to Hartford, Conn., through the Windsor Locks canal, in order that the problem submitted under chapter 82 of the Resolves of 1897 might be better understood.

In the pursuit of information relative to the latest improvement in the manner of building and equipping modern piers, with direct reference to the construction of the Commonwealth's pier at South Boston, the Board, with its engineer, has recently visited Philadelphia and New York, and consulted with the engineers connected with the improvement of the water fronts in those places.

SOUTH BOSTON FLATS.

On that portion of the Commonwealth's flats at South Boston south of Congress Street but little work has been required. The streets and sewers are generally in good condition. The carts of the street department of the city have continued during the year to deposit ashes and street sweepings on the blocks between C and E streets. On the area north of Congress Street material taken from cellar excavations and other similar sources and brought to the flats for a dump has been largely used for additional filling in the low spots caused by the settling of the material which was taken from the harbor and deposited on the lot leased to L. G. Burnham & Co. As the material of this class was insufficient to do all that was required at this place, a contract* was made, March 11, 1897, with the Bay State Dredging Company, the lowest bidder, to dredge about 4,000 cubic yards of material from the adjacent flats, and place the same on the filled land just inside the easterly bulkhead. Under this contract 4,356 yards were dredged and deposited, at a cost of \$308.97. The work was completed May 5, 1897. This material was carted onto the premises and spread there without cost to the Commonwealth.

In accordance with the provisions of chapter 392 of the

* See Appendix C.

Acts of 1897, a lease to L. G. Burnham & Co. of about 6½ acres of the filled land, together with a small wharf, was executed under date of April 1, 1897, for a term of fifteen years.

A contract with Albert A. Hersey for building the wharf aforesaid, which was in force at the date of the last report, was completed May 14, 1897, at a total cost of \$7,742.10. Upon completion of the wharf, the exposed condition in which vessels lying at it would be placed was observed, and it was decided that a breakwater to protect vessels from the northerly and westerly winds and waves would be necessary. For this purpose a breakwater 10 feet wide and 400 feet long, parallel with and 100 feet north-westerly from the wharf, was constructed, without expense to the Commonwealth, thus forming a protected berth for vessels lying at the wharf.

The dredging of a channel 75 feet wide, 18 feet deep and 1,550 feet long from the main ship channel to this wharf, under a contract with the New England Dredging Company, which was in force at the date of the last report, was completed April 15, 1897, at a cost of \$13,945. During this dredging a ledge was uncovered on the easterly side of the channel and about 120 feet northerly of the exterior line of occupation of the flats. This ledge projected about 20 feet into the channel and about 4 feet above the required depth. It contained about 40 cubic yards, lying above the grade of 18½ feet below mean low water.

After advertising for proposals, a contract* for its removal was made May 20, 1897, with Hiram W. Phillips of Quincy, the lowest bidder, at a cost of \$777. This work was completed June 22, 1897.

A buoy was placed near the entrance to the channel on the location of this ledge, and this entrance being at about the centre of the area assigned for the general anchorage of vessels in the harbor, was usually found occupied by some vessel at anchor when wanted for use as a channel. In order to bring the attention of masters of vessels to the entrance, that they might avoid anchoring in such a manner as to

* See Appendix D.

obstruct it, the Board requested the inspector of the lighthouse establishment for this district to place two buoys in the entrance to the channel. He at once complied with this request, and it is anticipated that no further difficulty will be experienced.

Capacious and expensive structures, equipped with every modern appliance for speedy and economical handling of coal on a large scale, have been erected on the premises leased, and relieve the location from its former appearance of remoteness and isolation.

Under the authority given by chapter 513 of the Acts of 1897, plans and specifications were prepared, and after due advertisement, a contract * was made with Messrs. Perkins, White & Co., under date of Nov. 15, 1897, to build the solid portion of a new pier on the northerly side of the Commonwealth's property, for the sum of \$198,416; the work to be completed Feb. 1, 1899. Before preparing these plans, careful studies were made as to the best location, proportions and method of construction for the proposed pier. The location finally determined on is east of and substantially parallel with Pier No. 4 of the New England Railroad Company, leaving a dock 175 feet wide between the face of the proposed pier and the boundary line between the Commonwealth's property and that of the railroad company. The plans of the railroad company provide for a dock 100 feet wide on its side of the boundary line, which, together with the width left by the Commonwealth, will make a dock 275 feet wide between the piers.

The pier when completed will be 400 feet wide and 1,200 feet long. The method of construction will be by building a central portion or core of solid filling, to be dredged from the adjacent docks. This will be enclosed by a sea wall of granite blocks resting on a foundation of piles driven to extreme low-water mark, the entire structure having a length of 1,150 feet and a width of 300 feet. Surrounding the piles a riprap of stone and gravel will slope down to the dock to a depth of 30 feet at mean low water. This slope will ultimately be covered by a platform 50 feet wide, to be con-

* See Appendix B.

structed outside and around the two sides and the end of the masonry, thus completing the projected width of 400 feet and length of 1,200 feet, and creating a surface of wharf area of about 11 acres, around which docks may be dredged and maintained to the depth of 35 and even 40 feet at low water if desired without danger of undermining the structure.

Work under this contract for the solid core and masonry was commenced the first of December.

Inquiry was early made with reference to occupation of the pier when completed, and now negotiations are in progress looking toward a long-term lease of the entire pier and docks.

It is essential to the proper development and occupancy of the proposed pier and entire water front of this Commonwealth flats property that it should have suitable and convenient railroad connections, and these could be readily arranged and maintained in connection with the tracks of the New England Railroad Company.

It is also planned in connection with the pier, to construct a proper approach for a car-float ferry, in order that carloads of merchandise may be transported from terminals on the north and east sides of the harbor to this pier without breaking bulk.

It is becoming recognized that the use of water-ways for distribution of freight at the end of a railroad terminal is the most economical means of conveyance.

As has been said recently in one of the leading engineering papers published in this country, in reference to distributing freight entering New York on the west side over the trunk line terminals and their proposed connections with New York by means of bridges and tunnels for the purpose of export: "The fact is, that, instead of the North River being a barrier to traffic under present conditions, it is really a vast distributing yard, with its tracks always maintained free of cost, and in which a train can move from one point to any other without obstruction or delay." . . . "The car-float goes from the Jersey City pier to any point on the East River, the Harlem River or the harbor; and, by reason of this enormous mileage of water front, a loaded freight car