

Free Port Could Make A City Out Of Marystown, Nfld

MARYSTOWN, Nfld. (CP) — This town of 1,440 in southern Newfoundland may become a city if plans for a free port near here materialize.

The scheme foresees docks and warehouses, oil refineries, distilleries and meat-packing plants on the shores of neighboring Mortier Bay.

Backers envisage secondary industries developing beside big stockpiles of raw and manufactured goods unloaded here for trans-shipment. A free port permits shippers to postpone payment of customs duties.

But officials in other East Coast ports say a duty-free port here would draw off ships now using Halifax, Saint John, N.B., Montreal and Quebec.

Legislation paving the way for a free port passed the Newfoundland legislature in 1956.

Delegates at a conference of the Dominion Marine Association and Lake Carriers Association at Seignior Club, Tuesday heard the scheme "is receiving favorable government attention" at Ottawa.

SAY U.S. FUNDS ON TAP

The Montreal Gazette says the project is promoted by the Mortier Bay Development Company, a Toronto group reported to have United States capital behind it.

Mortier Bay is a landlocked deep-water arm of Placentia Bay on the eastern side of Burin Peninsula, which projects from Newfoundland's south coast.

The entrance is about a mile wide. The bay broadens inside until it is about three miles across. The harbor is ice-free, and near the Atlantic and Gulf of St. Lawrence shipping lanes.

Mortier Bay is seen as the eastern terminus of the St. Lawrence seaway, with Port Arthur, Milwaukee and Chicago as the western terminals.

Huge lake freighters would haul Canadian and American cargoes from the Great Lakes to Mortier Bay for trans-shipment around the world.

The same boats would pick up freight dumped here by ocean carriers and deliver it to the industrial heart of North America. Ships of new design are being discussed for trade between the bay and the Great Lakes.

BINS FOR WHEAT?

The St. John's, Nfld., Telegram says another proposal is the establishment of grain elevators at Mortier Bay, "making possible a substantial saving on freight costs of Canadian export wheat."

The Telegram says the backers "have already discussed the creation of a meat-packing industry for the shipment of chilled rather than frozen Canadian meats. They have also discussed the establishment of distilleries and oil refineries. Looking far into the future they foresee the area adjoining the free port as Canada's major industrial centre on the Atlantic Coast."

However, Port Manager J. R. Mitchell of Halifax calls it "a far-fetched scheme that could have a detrimental effect on Halifax if it were to materialize."

W. Stanley Lee, Halifax port commission chairman, says it "would be anything but helpful to ports like Halifax and Saint John, N.B."

A Halifax labor spokesman says a free port would undoubtedly be coupled with moves to extend the St. Lawrence shipping season.

SEEN AS STORAGE DEPOT

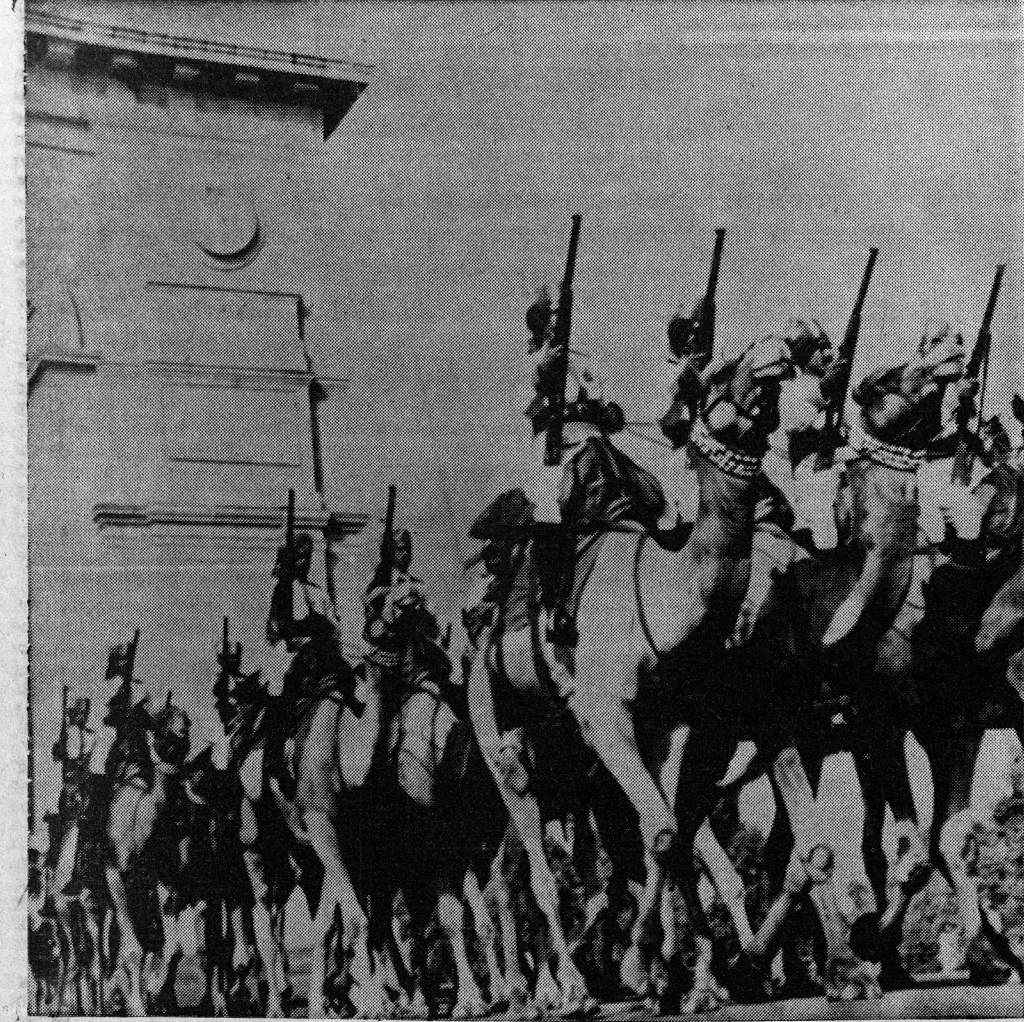
Import goods could be stored indefinitely at Mortier Bay and moved to central Canadian and U.S. markets when the St. Lawrence season opens.

With lake ships continuing east to Newfoundland, Montreal would also be bypassed as a trans-shipment centre.

The history of Mortier Bay goes back to an English promoter known here as "Fog-free Zone" Thompson. He is said to have spent \$70,000 of his own money trying to make his dream of a free port a reality.

But he never succeeded in interesting enough people to put up the millions of dollars required.

Thompson crossed the Atlantic scores of times trying to interest backers. His journeys came to an end during the Second World War when his ship was sunk by a German submarine.



CAMEL CORPS COLORFUL IN JET AGE

A unit of the Rajasthan Camel Corps which distinguished itself in two World Wars passes through the India Gate in New Delhi in rehearsal for the India Republic Day Parade on Sunday. The high-perched troops wear glistening white uniforms and red turbans. Jet planes screamed overhead during the parade as the Camel Corps, elephants and bullock carts led an anachronistic beauty to the parade. (AP Wirephoto)

TIMELY NOTES ON FUR TOPICS

DEMAND IS STRONG

That the fur business in the United States had one of its healthiest years in 1957, is shown by a release which states that insolvencies in the fur industry last year declined about 60 per cent in total valuation. This was contained in a report released by American Fur Merchants' Association last week.

"During 1957," the report states, "fur insolvencies totalled \$3,757,679 compared to \$9,374,600 in 1956." Figures were compiled by William Kolodney, executive director of the American Fur Merchants' Association. Mr. Kolodney stated that the 1957 picture might even be brighter because of some of the reports, on further examination, proved to be exaggerated.

PRICES ADVANCE

At the New York Auction Co. sale in Minneapolis on January 19, standard mink prices advanced five percent, and pastels and autumn haze types rose ten per cent, compared with the same sale on December 30. There were quite a number of European customers and a large number of buyers from Eastern U. S.

Ninety per cent of the 90,000 pelts were sold, broken down into types — 15,000 standard mink pelts were 93 per cent sold. Top bundles of Great Lakes selects (standards) sold at \$41.00 for males and \$21.00 for females. Other good lots of better color males sold from \$30.00 to \$38.00; females from \$16.00 to \$18.75. There were price advances shown in the 20,000 pastels and 13,000 EMBA autumn haze types, which rose up to ten percent over December. The pastels and EMBA autumn haze pelts were 95 per cent sold; top autumn haze males went at \$36.50 and females at \$17.50. Top bundles of standard type males brought \$40.00 and females \$18.00.

ALL GRADES

A feature of the sale was the demand for ordinary types. The 7,000 Sapphires and 6,000 EMBA Ceruleans were 86 per cent sold, and prices, while unchanged from December, held firm. An outstanding string of Ceruleans in a good selection brought to males price of \$45.50, while the best female bundle brought \$20.00.

Nine thousand silverfox and 6,000 EMBA Argentas were 87 per cent sold. Altogether the sellers and buyers were well satisfied with the above sale.

The Canadian Fur Auction Sales Company (Quebec) Ltd., which wound up its mink sale on Friday, January 17 in Montreal reported a strong demand for dark, as well as mutation mink, and this resulted in high percentages being moved, and the price level set at the December 20 opening auction going by the board.

Majestic Dark Mink sold 98 per cent, Autumn Haze sold 90 per cent, Desert Gold 90 per cent, Cerulean 92 per cent, Argenta 80 per cent. There turnovers were frequently better in the unlabelled section of the catalogue, notably in pastels and topaz, which were both sold 100 per cent.

WORLD WIDE

Buying power was evenly distributed between New York, Europe and local domestic houses. Interesting highlight of the sale was the presence of buyers from Mexico, who purchased a substan-

stantial quantity of darks. Manager Arthur C. Prentice stated that the 90 per cent turnover of the entire catalogue represents a feature which did not happen in years. It shows that the market today is sound, he added.

A despatch, from London, dated January 16, states that Russian ranch mink showed big advances over February, 1957, levels at Aming, Chadwick and Kiver's sale there on January 16. A general strong trend in mink prices continued all through the sale. The Russian ranch mink were more than 90 per cent sold; males advanced 30 per cent and females 50 per cent over February, 1957, sale levels.

The offering of Norwegian standard mink was 71 per cent sold. Males were very firm and females advanced 20 per cent. The despatch also states that a Hudson's Bay Company wild mink collection was 100 per cent sold, and 95,000 ranch mink (standard) was 100 per cent sold.

Our comment on the above is that the indications all over Europe point to a greatly increasing demand for mink, and that means an upturn in prices for mink produced in Canada and the United States. It has been our observation through the years that when the January sales start off strong, with large proportions of the consignments sold, it means a good year for the industry.

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PRIESTS IMPRISONED

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — The Austrian catholic press service reported Monday that between 450 and 500 Catholic priests and monks are being held in prisons and concentration camps in Czechoslovakia. It added that at least five bishops are also held in prisons, "reform" institutes or under house arrest.

TOKYO (Reuters)—The United States is sending an icebreaker to aid a Japanese Antarctic expedition trapped aboard the icebreaker Soya Maru in pack ice for nearly a month, a spokesman for the Japanese expedition said here Saturday. The 6,516-ton U.S. Navy icebreaker Burton Island was less than 1,000 miles from the Soya, he added.

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