

On the Upper Canadian side in the 1826 season, there remained only one public light, Gibraltar Point. Indeed, the trend in Upper Canada was not towards new construction but the reduction of lighthouse duties. In 1818, schooner captain John Mosier petitioned the Assembly, complaining about the inequity of the shipping interest paying into a fund that was not being invested in the services for which it was collected. He presented the Assembly with two alternatives: build more lights or cancel the duties at ports where there were none. They chose a third alternative and reduced duties. Mosier's petition was followed by one from the owners of the steamboat *Frontenac*, fretting that they paid duties on tonnage that could not be used to carry passengers or freight. Duties on steamboats were consequently reduced by one third.²⁶ Three years later, the *Frontenac's* owners were begging for additional relief from tonnage duties while Edward Oates, who operated a packet schooner between York and Niagara, produced yet another petition. The resulting act was one that reduced the lighthouse duties at York, the one remaining Upper Canadian port at which they were collected, to the tonnage of goods discharged at the port, exclusive of the personal baggage of passengers.²⁷ Revenues plummeted.

The final act of this phase came in 1826 when it was generally conceded that major repairs and improvements were needed for the eighteen-year-old structure on Gibraltar Point. The sum of £200 was authorized for "good and sufficient lamps and reflectors," and other improvements. To pay for it, vessels had the option of taking out a £15 annual license, or pay fixed sums on each entrance into York harbour. The fees were generally less those prior to 1821, especially for larger vessels, but they were once again chargeable to the tonnage of the hull, not the cargo.²⁸

In the twenty-three years since the first lighthouse act, a steady, if declining duty had been charged to vessels entering Upper Canadian ports on Lake Ontario. This had yielded about ten years of lighthouse service on Mississauga Point at the mouth of the Niagara River before the destruction of that light in 1814, and thus far eighteen years on Gibraltar Point at the entrance to York [Toronto harbour]. But instead of increasing their commitment to aids to navigation, the legislature had, at every opportunity taken the alternate tack, by reducing fees and avoiding new commitments.

As a point of comparison, it is worth noting that the lighthouse tolls in England

(\$3500); 17th Cong., sess. 1, chap. 119 (7 May 1822) Fort Niagara (lamp on the mess-house, \$1000+\$1500 in 1823); 17 Cong., Sess. 2 chap. 56 (3 Mar. 1823) Fort Gratiot (\$3500); 18th Cong. Sess. 1, chap. 179 (26 May 1824), Great Sodus (\$4500), Grand River (\$8000) [Fairport]; 18th Cong. Sess. 2, chap. 113 (3 Mar. 1825) Cleveland Pier; 19th Cong. Sess. 1, chap. 73 (18 May 1826), Dunkirk, NY (\$6000), Buffalo, NY (\$2500) as replacement for initial light, Tibbets Point, NY (\$3000). See also David W. Francis, "Early Lighthouse Construction on the Great Lakes: A Case Study," *Inland Seas* 44:4 (Winter 1988), 290-99 which is focussed on the Grand River, Ohio, light.

²⁶ *Ninth Report*, 535 (13 Mar. 1818); 47 (4 Nov. 1818). Upper Canada, *Statutes*, 59 Geo. III (1818), chap. 16 (Light-house and tonnage duties). This was consistent with British legislation which had first drawn a distinction between gross and registered tonnage for steamboats.

²⁷ *JHA* 352 (23 Feb. 1821); 365 (1 Mar. 1821); 246 (3 Mar. 1821); 372 (5 Mar. 1821). Upper Canada, *Statutes*, 2 Geo. IV (1821), chap. 15 (Small Craft). Archives of Ontario, F 32 Macaulay family fonds, C. A Hagerman to John Macaulay, 7 March 1821, 11 March 1821.

²⁸ Upper Canada, *Statutes*, 7 Geo. IV (1826), chap. 9 (Gibraltar Point light house). Vessels under fifty tons were to be charged 7s 6d while those over fifty were charged 12s 6d, a pricing model that gave significant advantage to the *Frontenac* at upwards of 700 tons.