

were also significantly reduced in the 1820s, but for different reasons. The Trinity House revenues from lights that it was acquiring and building were more than its expenses for operation. As the surplus was intended to support its pensioners, Trinity House was in a position to reduce tolls.²⁹ And therein lay the major difference, Trinity reduced tolls while improving its service. In Upper Canada tolls were reduced because service remained limited.

1827 - 1840

Beginning with the 1827-28 legislative session and for most of those that followed through to 1840, the attitude of the Assembly towards lighthouse shifted to the opposite tack. By this point, the Upper Canadian government had started to engage in dramatically larger public works. A relatively small investment in the Burlington Bay Canal (1824), was succeeded by larger loans underwriting the nominally private Welland Canal efforts (chartered in 1824), and then by the even larger public stake in the Saint Lawrence canals (1834).³⁰ At the same time, the Canada Company (1827) supplied the funds that guaranteed much of the civil list (the salaries of the executive branch of government), the share of duties collected in Lower Canada was up, and the revenues from goods imported via the US increased dramatically with the opening of the Erie and Oswego canals. The result of these changes combined with elections in 1828 was a provincial legislature more intent on promoting provincial economic development and with more money to spend.³¹ By their very nature, lighthouses were a substantially cheaper investment, and were pulled along in the wake of the rest of provincial government spending.

Which projects got the consideration of the legislature? Prior to 1840 lighthouse construction was usually initiated by a petition to the House of Assembly. Typically, the shipping trade would identify a problematic land feature or residents of a port would seek to encourage shipping to their neighbourhood. Perhaps coincidentally, a petition from thirty or so residents of the Western District requesting a light at Long Point on Lake Erie was presented to the House ten days before the lieutenant governor forwarded a set of correspondence from officials in the United States, Britain and British North America, urging the same action.³²

Indeed from 1827 to the end of the period under review only two petitions for lighthouses were left to lie on the table. In January 1827, Captain Alexander Macintosh petitioned for a lighthouse on Point Abino, on the north shore of Lake Erie between Buffalo and what would become Port Colborne. It was unusual not only for being turned down, but also for being the petition of a single individual, and for having a reasoned explanation for its refusal. The select committee considering it demanded: "that some more definite proposition should be submitted to the

²⁹ Taylor, 757.

³⁰ Rideau and Ottawa canals were largely financed by Britain. For the details of their financing and construction see George Raudzens, *The British Ordnance Department and Canada's Canals, 1815-1855* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1979).

³¹ McCalla, 163-171. He estimates that £278,000 was spent by the Upper Canadian government on the Welland Canal to 1840 and another £352,000 on the St. Lawrence canals (305). By contrast only about £25,000 was spent on lighthouses, both for construction and operations (302).

³² *JHA*, 1829, 8; Appendix, 32-33 "Communication from the Secretary of State respecting the erection of a Light House on Long Point."