

Whether we care to believe it or not, it is now twenty-three years since the termination of the passenger service operated between Port McNicoll, Sault Ste. Marie and Port Arthur/Fort William by the 1907-built Canadian Pacific Railway steamers KEEWATIN and ASSINIBOIA. It seems like only yesterday! Even though many of us do not visit there very often since the C.P.R. boats stopped running, Port McNicoll still has its harbour and grain elevator, and lakers still call there to unload grain. (And several T.M.H.S. members live in or near Port McNicoll.)

But how many people know the history of the man-made harbour at Port McNicoll, which became the eastern terminus of the C.P.R. lake service in 1912? Very few, we believe, and accordingly we hope that the following article, which appeared in the January 1912 issue of "The Railway and Marine World", will be of interest to our readers.

"The C.P.R.'s new Victoria Harbour terminal on the southern shore of Georgian Bay, now practically completed, is designed to be the eastern lake terminus of the new grain route of that system. This route has as its objective a reduction of mileage to the eastern distributing points, as compared with that of the present route by way of Owen Sound and Toronto. Shortening of the distance is effected both by a more direct steamship line from the western ports and by the construction of a new railway connecting Victoria Harbour with Montreal by way of Peterborough, so as to eliminate the southerly deviation to Toronto. Connection with the latter city will be maintained, however, on the Sudbury-Kleinburg branch by way of Coldwater Junction. A further considerable advantage over the old route will be gained in the greater trainloads made possible by the easier curves and gradients on the new road, which will nowhere exceed 4 deg. and 0.4 per cent., respectively.

"The construction of the Victoria Harbour terminal embraces a slip 600 feet wide and 25 feet deep, flanked by parallel wharves 3,000 feet long on the one side and 3,600 on the other. The slip is approached by an entrance channel about half a mile long, the entire channel and slip having been formed by the removal of some 3,000,000 cu. yds. of soft material and 200,000 cu. yds. of rock by dredging. The location provides perfect shelter to vessels in all kinds of weather. The dredging has been carried out under Government supervision, the contractor, since the inception of the work in 1908, having been the Canadian Dredge and Construction Co., with whom was associated up to 1910 the Owen Sound Dredging Co. The dredging plant has consisted, during the most of the time, of three large dipper dredges, handling from 2,000 to 5,000 cu. yds. per day, with attendant hopper scows and a large rock-drilling plant. The output of this dredging plant while working in rock has been from 400 to 600 cu. yds. per day.

"On the east side of the slip there has been constructed a 2,000,000 bushel grain elevator, unloading from vessels by means of two movable marine towers, each having a leg capacity on the dip of 20,000 bu. per hour. The grain can be elevated and distributed to any part of the storage house or to the working house, after weighing, whence it can be loaded into cars which are automatically fed through the track sheds by car pullers.

"The site of the elevator was formerly an island (Maple Island), which had to be connected with the mainland by means of a trestle about three-quarters of a mile long before construction could be started. This trestle was subsequently filled from trains. Work on the elevator started in May, 1909, and the plant was handling grain in the fall of 1910.

"About 30,000 cu. yds. of concrete were placed in the construction of this elevator and the wharf in front of it, the latter being 800 ft. long. Material for concrete was brought in by train, unloaded from centre-dump Hart cars into a belt conveyor, which carried it to a screening and washing plant. This plant was furnished with stone and sand storage bins, from which the material could be delivered to any one of four pairs of feeding bins located immediately over the concrete mixers. The mixers dumped into hoist buck-