
*The Business Elite and the Development
of Paris:
Intervention in Ports and Entrepôts,
1814-1834*

Barrie M. Ratcliffe
Université Laval, Québec

The burden of this article is two-fold. First, it suggests that historians have not sufficiently examined and appreciated either the extent or significance of changes taking place in the Parisian economy between the fall of Napoleon and the mid-nineteenth century.¹ During this neglected period, it is suggested, not only did the capital continue to be of ever-greater importance in the national economy but its industrial structure and economic geography were undergoing major change. Second, it demonstrates, through a study of attempts to establish new ports and *entrepôts* between 1814 and 1834, that already under the Restora-

¹ There are, of course, some partial exceptions to this. LOUIS BERGERON, *Banquiers, négociants et manufacturiers parisiens. Du Directoire à l'Empire*, Paris 1978, and RAYMONDE MONNIER, *Le faubourg Saint-Antoine (1789-1815)*, Paris 1981, offer some insights on the First Empire period. For the succeeding period, see ADELIN DAUMARD, *La bourgeoisie parisienne de 1815 à 1848*, Paris 1963, pp. 416-58; CHRISTOPHER H. JOHNSON, "Economic Change and Artisan Discontent: the Tailors' History, 1800-48," in *Revolution and Reaction: 1848 and the Second French Republic*, ed. Roger Price, London 1975, pp. 87-114; *Evolution de la géographie industrielle de Paris et sa proche banlieue au XIX^e siècle*, 2 vols. Paris 1972. However, none of these studies has the Parisian economy as its primary concern and the latter study's usefulness is limited by the descriptive approach and criteria adopted.

tion and especially in the boom of 1821-26 the city's economy was going through accelerating change and that its business elite responded dynamically to these developments. The projects studied proved to be largely unsuccessful. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the study of the speculation and of the attempts to enhance Paris's place in the French and even European economy that were made at this time is instructive both about the business elite, significant elements of which not only seized opportunities offered but tried to anticipate them, and about rapidly changing economic conditions. The chronological limits are imposed by the projects themselves: 1814 marks the beginning of the Parisian campaign to secure the *entrepôt* privilege for the capital, while 1834 sees the solution of the last of the problems, the siting of the bonded warehouse.

Any study of the business elite's intervention in urban space or of the wider question of the changing structure and functions of the Parisian economy encounters both empirical and methodological difficulties. Empirical because not only are archival sources incomplete and necessarily discrete on speculative aspects of the projects studied,² but deficient on the more general problems of the city's changing economic geography and complex patterns of traffic flows to, from and within the capital. A more long-term analysis of the Parisian economy and its place in the national economy is also hindered by the paucity of extant statistics. Not only were many of the city's administrative

² The sources available for the projects, speculations and conflicts of interest studied in this paper are scattered and incomplete. The archives of the companies concerned have not survived and the fragmentary archives of some of the banking houses involved are discreet both on the projects and the land speculation they entailed. Some administrative archives proved disappointing: the dossiers on company formation and ports at the Archives de Paris, for example (7S¹ 14-40 and D¹¹U³). It is possible that further research in cadastral records and notarial archives might add to our knowledge. The following abbreviations will be used to indicate archival sources: Archives Nationales: A. N.; Archives de la Chambre de Commerce de Paris: A. C. C. P.; Archives de Paris: A. P.; Bibliothèque Nationale: B. N.; Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris: B. H. V. P.

records destroyed in the flames of the Commune³ but published statistics are incomplete⁴ and unsatisfactory. The first quantitative studies of Parisian industry were those made by the Chamber of Commerce in 1848 and 1860. However rich and suggestive these inquiries are, though, their usefulness is limited by the fact that we have no earlier statistical point of reference to help us determine change, by the fact that the 1848 inquiry did not embrace the inner suburbs, where significant industrial development had been taking place, and by the fact that the two inquiries are difficult to compare because different criteria were adopted to group industries and because the boundaries of Paris were radically altered in 1860.⁵ The difficulties are enhanced if Paris's role as a redistribution centre is to be determined, for we do not possess the kind of information on internal trade that the customs service provides for external. For similar reasons, and though we have many fragmentary indications of their importance,⁶ the extent of the putting-out network of Parisian merchant manufacturers or of capital flows to and from the capital cannot be adequately measured.

As for methodology, Le Roy Ladurie has divided historians into two groups: those he calls the parachutists, who float down from high altitudes and have a broad vision of historical

³ This does not mean, of course, that statistical series do not exist in administrative archives. One example is the octroi records whose value for the economic historian has been shown by ROBERT LAURENT, *L'Octroi de Dijon au XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1960.

⁴ The useful *Recherches statistiques sur la Ville de Paris et le Département de la Seine*, 6 vols., Paris 1823-1860, are uneven and the early volumes do not indicate sources used.

⁵ *Statistique de l'industrie à Paris résultant de l'enquête faite par la Chambre de Commerce pour les années 1847-1848*, Paris 1851; *Statistique de l'industrie à Paris*, Paris 1864. Some of the difficulties involved in comparing these inquiries are discussed in T.J. MARKOVITCH, "Le revenu industriel et artisanal sous la Monarchie de Juillet et le Second Empire," *Economies et sociétés*, cahiers de l'I. S. E. A., série AF, IV, 1967. For the difficulties of calculating money and real wages in Paris at this time, see JACQUES ROUGERIE, "Remarques sur l'histoire des salaires à Paris au XIX^e siècle." *Mouvement Social*, LXIII, 1968, pp. 71-108.

⁶ As in *Statistique de l'industrie à Paris résultant de l'enquête...*, p. 121.

problems, and those he terms the truffle-hunters, who tirelessly sniff around in dusty archives in the hope of discovering some buried treasure they can serve up as a gastronomic delicacy. Since the problems treated here raise wider questions about the Parisian economy, how to categorize it, how to weigh its importance, I would have liked to have begun my research armed with models and an overview. I did not.

The principal reason why I did not is that, in contrast to other facets of their history, the economies of nineteenth-century cities and their insertion into wider processes have been little studied. Even the so-called new urban history, which has given us greater understanding of urbanization in industrial society, has been preoccupied less with economic change than social processes — migration, mobility and stratification — and ecology. Indicative of the rudimentary state of our understanding are the typologies that have been adopted, such as the functionalist or the biological with their attendant metaphors of growth and decay, arteries and urban tissue, or the concepts of the «preindustrial» and «industrial» city. Problems of approach also remain unsolved. Since a city is a legal but not necessarily an economic entity and since a city and its suburbs are tied in relations with other and wider regions, what are the proper limits of microanalysis? How can a city's economy be integrated into wider processes? Do cities, or economic regions in general, grow at the expense of others, reflect wider forces, or can they act as «growth poles» within a national economy? Historians are only beginning to address themselves to such questions⁷ and the place of cities and urbanization in nineteenth-century economies remains problematical and all the more so in the light of the cancerous growth

⁷ Thus, for example, the statistical analysis of regional disparities and the explanation of differences in the recent French past has barely been broached. For a brief introduction to the problem, see J.-C. TOUTAIN, "The Uneven Growth of Regional Incomes in France from 1840 to 1970," in Paul Bairoch and Maurice Lévy-Leboyer (eds.), *Disparities in Economic Development since the Industrial Revolution*, London 1981, pp. 302-15.

of cities in the contemporary underdeveloped world. There are, though, some positive signs. A recent study of eighteenth-century urbanisation in Britain suggests some ways in which cities promoted change — by stimulating agriculture, by acting as redistribution centres, by specializing in tertiary sectors, by drawing in and circulating investment capital, by promoting a new consumer ethos.⁸

The paucity of our knowledge of the Parisian economy under the restoration and July monarchy is a striking illustration of the relative poverty of urban economic history.⁹ Recent historians of the city have devoted themselves to other problems. More traditional scholars have studied institutions like the administration and the municipal debt,¹⁰ while those who have used newer approaches have concentrated on in-migration--and the multiple sense of shock it generated among contemporaries--on relationships--real or supposed--between poverty and criminality and revolution, artisans and protest.¹¹ Louis Chevalier's well-known *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses*.. stresses not economic change but the biological, instinctive forces that he claims underpin the city's history. By emphasizing the 'pathological state' of Paris at this time, he overstates the crisis and overlooks the vital economic changes that were taking place.¹²

⁸ P. J. CORFIELD, *The Impact of English Towns, 1700-1800*, Oxford 1982, pp. 94-8.

⁹ Twenty years ago Bertrand Gille was complaining about the underdeveloped state of the economic history of Paris. *Paris: fonctions d'une capitale*, Paris 1962, p. 151. For a suggestive overview of the strengths and weaknesses of urban history in France, see LOUIS BERGERON and MARCEL RONCAYOLO, "De la ville préindustrielle à la ville industrielle. Essai sur l'historiographie française," *Quaderni Storici*, 1975, pp. 827-76.

¹⁰ JEAN TULARD, *Paris et son administration (1800-1830)*, Paris 1976; GENEVIÈVE MASSA-GILLE, *Histoire des emprunts de la Ville de Paris (1814-1875)*, Paris 1973.

¹¹ *La formation de la population parisienne au XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1950 and *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses à Paris pendant la première moitié du XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1958.

¹² As Jeanne Gaillard points out, the crises were not pathological but symptomatic of anarchic growth. *Paris, la ville 1852-1870, l'urbanisme à l'heure d'Hausman (sic)*, Paris 1977, p. 4.

Historians, indeed, have been predisposed for a variety of reasons to believe that the city's economy was not changing in any significant way. After all, this was the pre-Haussmann Paris, this was a pedestrian rather than a railway city and its industry was largely artisanal, catering for local and luxury markets, and thus apparently little touched by improved methods and technical innovations. Given both improvements in water carriage and changes in the city's economy at this time, these assumptions may be erroneous. Some historians, applying mechanical models that equate industrial development only with the factory and large-scale concerns, have also been led to claim that Paris missed its industrial vocation in the first half of the nineteenth century and that there was even a decline in key modern industries, a decline only reversed after 1850.¹³ Such a claim is not only empirically dubious, it is methodologically questionable in view of what we know about the dualist character of French industrialization in this period, when factory and workshop not merely coexisted but were often mutually supportive and when innovation proceeded, at least in part, 'downstream' through the introduction of new products, new qualities, new finishing methods.¹⁴ Given this pattern, there are *prima facie* reasons for reconsidering the role of even Parisian artisanal industries.

There are, indeed, a number of obvious indications that the Parisian economy at this time was undergoing major change and was of increasing importance within the national economy and that the absence of any study of these developments needs rectifying. Demographically, Paris, already five times larger than

¹³ BERTRAND GILLE in his introduction to *Les essais d'industrialisation de Paris sous la Révolution et l'Empire. Documents sur l'état de l'industrie et du commerce de Paris et du Département de la Seine (1778-1810)*, Paris 1963, pp. 13-30. LÉVY-LEBOYER came to similar conclusions: "l'industrie peut s'installer à Paris, mais non y demeurer." *Les banques européennes et l'industrialisation internationale dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1964, p. 117.

¹⁴ MAURICE LÉVY-LEBOYER, "Les processus d'industrialisation: le cas de l'Angleterre et de la France," *Revue historique*, LXXIX, 1968, pp. 281-98.

the second city in 1800, grew faster in this period than any of the nine largest cities and its growth was faster than that of French urban population as a whole.¹⁵ Its suburbs, and inner suburbs in particular, grew even more rapidly than the capital itself.¹⁶ In terms of traffic and goods handled, Paris was the country's leading port, and, in terms of industrial production by value, was responsible for over a third of the national total by the 1840s.¹⁷ At least 60% of its population, indeed, were dependent on income from industry.

The capital's role in the economy, though, cannot properly be determined by establishing primacy. Despite the problems posed by an attempt to study the complex servo-mechanism that linked Paris with other regions, it is clear that the capital was of increasing importance. The Empire had already consecrated Paris's triumph over other regional redistribution centres like Lyon or Orleans.¹⁸ After 1815 the dynamism of the capital was all the more striking in view of the marking-time in many other regional redistribution centres and the languor of the Atlantic ports. Its business elite wielded increasing power in some sectors

¹⁵ Its 92% increase was surpassed only by the 10th largest city, Toulon, by Brest (11th) and by Saint-Etienne (13th). GEORGES DUPEUX, "La croissance urbaine en France au XIX^e siècle," *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale*, LII, 1974, pp. 173-89.

¹⁶ In 1801 the suburbs had the equivalent of 15.31% of the population of Paris. In 1851 they had 34.91%. C.-H. POUTHAS, *La population française pendant la première moitié du XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1956, p. 144.

¹⁷ The capital handled over 21,000 boats and 2.46 million tons of goods in 1843, of which 1.2 million came from the upper and 1.26 from the lower Seine. Unsigned note drawn up 14 April 1844. A. N. F¹⁴ 6816 (Basse Seine, XVIII^e siècle à 1847). In 1821, by contrast, some 11-13,000 boats had come to Paris, the majority from the upper Seine, *Recherches Statistiques...*, Vol. II, Paris, 1823, table XV. For calculations on the importance of Parisian industry, see T. J. MARKOVITCH, "Le revenu industriel et artisanal..." These estimates do not take into account the industries of the suburbs. As Markovitch himself points out, his figures are but rough estimates. This author does not accept the usefulness of Markovitch's attempts to adjust these statistics to eliminate artisanal industries.

¹⁸ As demonstrated by LOUIS BERGERON, *Banquiers, négociants et manufacturiers parisiens...*, pp. 167-204 and the same author's "Paris dans l'organisation des échanges intérieurs à la fin du XVIII^e siècle," in PIERRE LÉON (ed.), *Aires et structures du commerce français au XVIII^e siècle*, Lyon 1975, pp. 237-64.

of the economy.¹⁹ More important, perhaps, industry was a dynamic element in the Parisian economy and was of increasing weight in the national economy. The fact that the industry of the capital was dominated by small enterprises, artisanal production and the large and variegated local market²⁰ should not induce us into believing that structures were immobile or that Paris was of no consequence in French industrial growth.²¹ As the 1848 inquiry revealed, new products and more capitalistic forms of organization were developed in sectors untouched by mechanization--as, for instance, in shawl-and hat-making and ready-made clothing and shoes.²² At the same time, large-scale and mechanized Parisian industries--chemicals,²³ sugar-refining²⁴ and, above all, machine-building²⁵--that were among the leaders in their

¹⁹ See BERTRAND GILLE, *La banque et le crédit en France de 1815 à 1848*, Paris 1959 and MAURICE LÉVY-LEBOYER, *Les banques européennes...*

²⁰ Though Paris had 342,530 workers in 1847 (a depression year), only 11% of all industrial firms employed over ten workers. 50.26%, on the other hand, employed only one worker or the owner worked alone. The building and food processing industries that served the local market were responsible for 26% of total industrial turnover. *Statistique de l'industrie à Paris résultant de l'enquête faite par la Chambre de Commerce de Paris*, pp. 11 and 38-9. This still means, though, that there were 7,117 firms employing more than ten workers and of these 425 employed over fifty. These figures, it should be noted, do not take into account the industrial development -- especially important in metallurgy and machine-building -- in the inner suburbs north of the capital. See *Evolution de la géographie industrielle de Paris...*, vol. I, pp. 73-117.

²¹ For a critique of the approach that deems "progressive" only those structural changes towards large scale enterprise and heavy industry, see PATRICK O'BRIEN and CAGLAR KEYDER, "Les voies de passage vers la société industrielle en Grande-Bretagne et en France (1780-1914)," *Annales E. S. C.*, XXXIV, 1979, pp. 1284-1303.

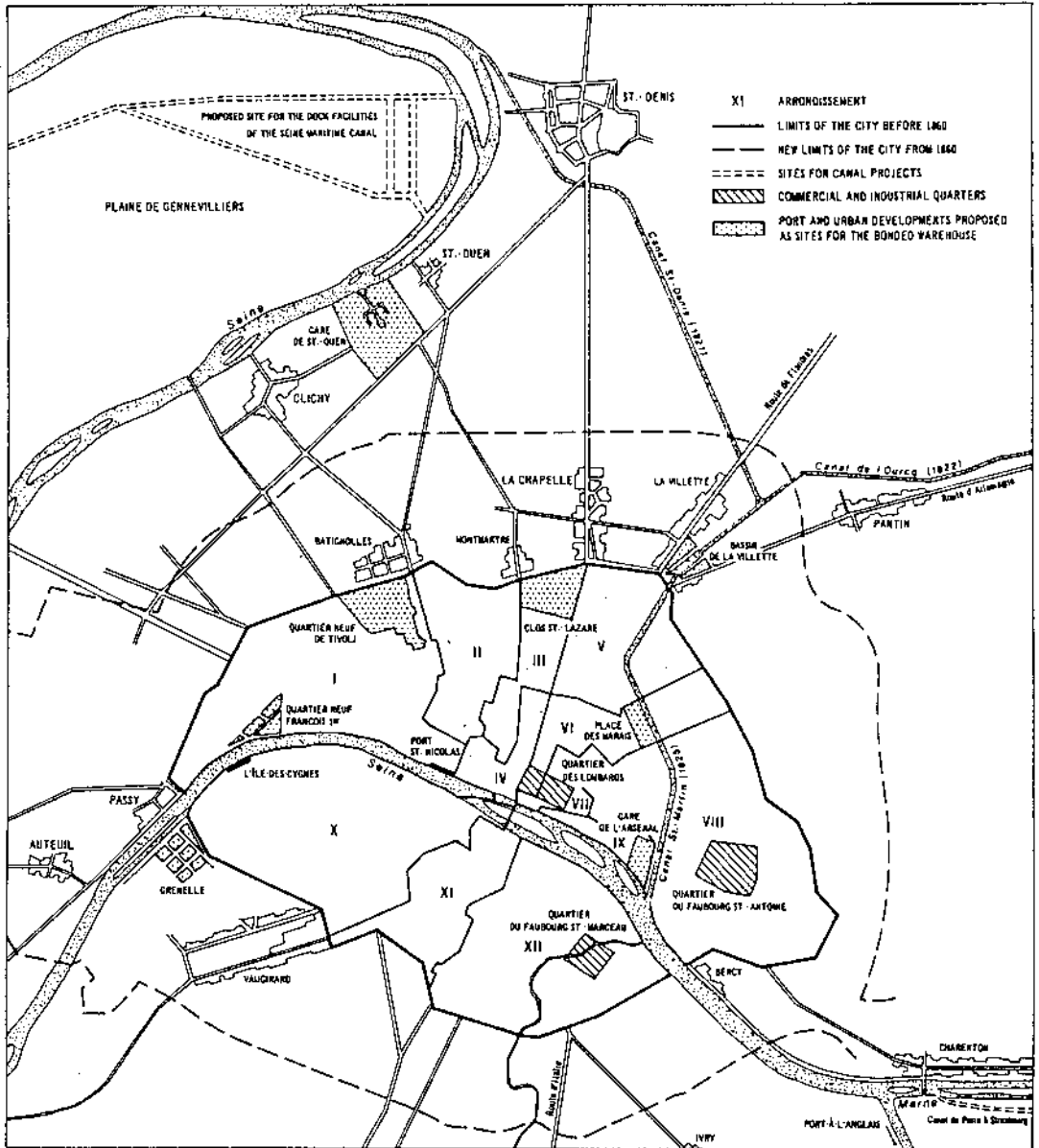
²² *Statistique de l'industrie à Paris...*, pp. 108-9 and 123. The fine metal-working and jewelry industries also saw important developments. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²³ The Parisian heavy chemical industry dates from the late eighteenth century. By 1836 there were already six major concerns within the city boundaries. See *Rapport du jury départemental de la Seine sur les produits de l'industrie admis au concours de l'exposition publique de 1827*, Paris 1832, 2 vols., vol. I, pp. 32 and 182-3; *Evolution de la géographie industrielle de Paris...*, vol. I, pp. 57-8.

²⁴ By 1821 there were already 25 refineries in the Paris area, 19 of which were in the city. *Recherches statistiques sur la ville de Paris...*, vol. II, table 82. By 1828 Paris produced over one-third of French refined sugar. JACQUES FIERAIN, *Les raffineries de sucre des ports en France (XIX^e début du XX^e siècles)*, Paris 1974, p. 112.

²⁵ To cite one instance, the Périers' Chaillot firm had furnished half of the c. 200

URBAN AND PORT DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARIS REGION, 1814-1834





sectors in France, also showed remarkable growth in this period. It is perhaps not surprising that industrial exports from Paris tripled in value between 1820 and 1847 and, as a percentage of French exports, rose from 11 to no less than 23%.²⁶ It is conceivable, then, that historians have underestimated the importance of industry in and around Paris as a dynamic element in the French economy.

There are thus good reasons for believing that scholars should abandon older categorizations of the 'preindustrial' city, such as those proposed by Gideon Sjöberg, wherein the latter is changed by the modern factory and the railway, as well as the belief that there was only one major shift from one type of city to another, rather than a series of changes spread over a long period, in favour of more inclusive definitions of the nineteenth-century city, such as those proposed by Sam Bass Warner for the United States.²⁷ Such a move might help us to understand the Parisian economy and its insertion in the French growth process.

steam-engines in use in France in 1810. JACQUES PAYEN, *Capital et machine à vapeur au XVIII^e siècle: les frères Périer et l'introduction en France de la machine à vapeur de Watt*, Paris 1969, pp. 226-7. Some indication of the importance of Parisian machine-building is seen in awards to Parisian exhibitors at industrial exhibitions. Thus of the 108 exhibitors in machine-building at the 1834 exhibition, 64 came from Paris and Parisians took over half the awards in the sector. *Exposition de l'industrie française de 1834, rapportée par S. Flachat*, Paris 1835, p. XVI. An indication of the variety and strength of machine-building in the capital in the 1820s is in the list of enterprises and products in *Bazar parisien ou choix annuel des premiers manufacturiers, artistes mécaniciens, etc.*, Paris 1826. By 1847 there were no fewer than 238 machine-builders in Paris, of whom 105 employed more than ten workers. Total turnover was 25 million francs. These figures underestimate the importance of machine-building since they do not include the inner suburbs. *Statistique de l'industrie à Paris...*, p. 156.

²⁶ ADELIN DAUMARD, *La Bourgeoisie parisienne...*, p. 425. These figures exaggerate the importance of Parisian industrial exports somewhat, since they include goods stocked in the capital but manufactured elsewhere. According to Frochot, Paris was responsible for 4.5% of the value of French exports in 1788. BERTRAND GILLE, *Les essais d'industrialisation...*, p. 52. There are slightly different statistics for 1819-24 and 1826-7 in *Recherches statistiques sur la ville de Paris...*, vol. II, tables 78 and 79 and vol. III, table 128.

²⁷ GIDEON SJÖBERG, *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present*, New York 1960, pp. 321-44; SAM BASS WARNER, JR., *The Urban Wilderness: a History of the American*

II

The Parisian business elite's intervention in urban space between 1814 and 1834 had two aspects: on the one hand, the creation of new residential quarters and, on the other, the building of new ports and warehousing facilities. Because of its ambitious nature and spectacular failure, the first aspect was much discussed and criticised by contemporaries²⁸ and has recently attracted attention from historians. Thus Jeanne Prongeau²⁹ has studied the *lotissements dirigés* that created new quarters on the right bank: François Ier, Beaujon, Saint-Georges and, above all, Tivoli and Saint-Lazare. Gérard Jacquemet³⁰ has analyzed similar residential developments in the inner suburbs at Les Batignolles, Passy, Neuilly and Romainville. We are relatively well informed, then, about this first aspect of the business elite's intervention in urban space, though we still do not know enough about the financing of the building boom³¹ and no-one has yet studied what was the most extensive of all the development schemes of this time--Violet's Grenelle on the left bank.

City, New York 1972, pp. 60-4. Warner insists that technology and means of transport — water and horsepower, canals, steamships and railways — confer a unity on the first phase down to about 1870 and that electricity, mass transit and the internal combustion engine characterise the second, c. 1870-1920.

²⁸ See critical comments in *Mémoire adressé par une réunion de propriétaires, architectes et constructeurs de la ville de Paris à MM. les membres de la Commission d'enquête instituée par décision du Ministre de l'Intérieur du 7 juillet 1828*, Paris 1829, (B. N. Fonds Le Senne 6415 (1)) and "Rapport relatif aux entreprises de construction dans Paris, de 1821 à 1826, et à l'interruption des travaux depuis cette dernière date," *Recherches statistiques sur la Ville de Paris et le Département de la Seine*, vol IV, Paris, pp. 5-73.

²⁹ "Construction et aménagement des nouveaux quartiers de Paris (1820-1826)," *Histoire des entreprises*, II, 1958, pp. 6-32. See also BERNARD ROULEAU, "Le tracé des rues de Paris, formation, typologie, fonctions," Centre de Recherches et Documentation, *Mémoires et Documents*, V, Paris 1967, pp. 92-101.

³⁰ "Lotissements et construction dans la proche banlieue parisienne, 1820-1840," *Paris et Ile-de-France. Mémoires*, XXV, 1974, pp. 207-56.

³¹ As indicated by MICHEL LESCURE, *Les banques, l'Etat et le marché immobilier en France à l'époque contemporaine (1820-1940)*, Paris 1982, pp. 57-60 and 66-71.

Apart from the scale, however, there is little that is novel in these speculations: we are aware of the continuing importance of urban property-owning for the Parisian bourgeoisie³² and the *lotissement dirigé*, where land was bought, a new quarter laid out and lots resold, has its origin in the early seventeenth century, as, for instance, in the transformation of the Ile Saint-Louis.

Besides, all these speculations were failures, at least in the short run,³³ because they sought to cater only for a quickly saturated bourgeois residential market. This explains why this form of intervention has some links with the second. During the slump that followed the 1821-6 boom promoters sought to fructify their investments by giving their quarters new commercial functions. This is particularly the case with the two most costly right-bank developments: Tivoli and Saint-Lazare. (See map) From 1821 onwards the banker Jonas Hagerman and the entrepreneur Sylvain Mignon had created a new quarter in the large area that formed the northern portion of the first arrondissement. This «Europe» quarter, as its promoters called it, failed to attract buyers and remained little developed through the 1820s and beyond. The Saint-Lazare quarter, between the rue du faubourg Saint-Denis and the rue du faubourg Saint-Martin, planned by Auguste Constantin, a leading figure in building speculation, and backed by Laffitte, the André and Cottier bank and the Duc de Bassano, also dates from 1821. By 1825 when, in an attempt to secure a faster return on their investments, its

³² The profitability of real estate is indicated by the fact that the price of land in the capital increased thirty times, 1830-1900/1910, while the general price level remained stable. JEAN BASTIÉ, "Capital immobilier et marché immobilier parisiens," *Annales de géographie*, LXIX^e année, 1960, pp. 225-50. The importance of the property-owner and of property-owning for the Parisian élite is shown by ADELINE DAUMARD, *Maisons de Paris et propriétaires parisiens au XIX^e siècle, 1809-1880*, Paris 1965. However, only a tiny proportion of Parisian property-owners engaged in property speculation. ADELINE DAUMARD, *La bourgeoisie...*, p. 505.

³³ As is shown by the bankruptcy files of Vassal, Constantin and Moissan-Devaux (1830) and Ardoin and Milleret (1831) A. P. D^oU¹ (faillites). The successful development at Les Batignolles is an exception to this.

promoters set up a six-million-franc joint-stock company, they had managed to sell only 15 percent of the land they had originally purchased.³⁴ Three years later they still held 85 percent of the land.³⁵ The company, then, was a spectacular failure and was dissolved in February 1830.³⁶

If this first facet of the business elite's intervention in urban space is relatively well-known, the second remains unknown and unexplored.³⁷ It is the purpose of this paper to discuss the three major projects of the 1814-1834 period. The first consists of attempts to create new river ports at Grenelle, Saint-Ouen and on the Ivry plain. The second is the plan to build a Seine maritime canal and to establish a vast dock facility on the London model on the Gennevilliers plain. The third involves the campaign for a bonded warehouse for the capital and the conflict between proponents of prospective sites that followed authorization for the *entrepôt* early in 1832. All of these projects involved an element of land speculation and cooperation between projectors and property-owners but in each case success in sales of land depended on the commercial success of the enterprise. How is this blossoming of plans for building costly new facilities to be explained?

It was prompted by the changes in the interrelated economic functions and demography of the Paris region that were already having an impact on traffic flows, on ports and warehousing facilities, as well as on the use of urban space in general. The

³⁴ File on the company A. N. 44 AQ 16. The joint-stock company was authorized 16 September 1825.

³⁵ Etat de situation de la Compagnie, 31 juillet 1828, A. N. F¹² 6790 (Compagnie du nouveau quartier Poissonnière).

³⁶ It took the André and Cottier bank thirty years to settle the affairs of the defunct company. Of the founders, Laffitte, Constantin and Moissan-Devaux went bankrupt while Bassano was in financial difficulties in the early 1830s. BARON ERNOUF, *Maret Duc de Bossano*, Paris 1878.

³⁷ Though G. BERTIER DE SAUVIGNY devotes two paragraphs to ports and the maritime canal proposals. *Nouvelle histoire de Paris*, vol. V, *La Restauration*, Paris 1977, pp. 310-11.

westward shift of the capital's centre of gravity, for instance, was reinforced, while the inner suburbs to the north of the city were beginning to grow. Such developments and the prospect of continuing growth encouraged speculation in port and warehousing on the part of important elements in the business elite. Moreover, the boom of 1821-26 generated a business confidence that was reflected in a number of ambitious schemes for canals, railways, public works in the city, and even for investment companies. The business elite in general, then, reacted vigorously to widening opportunities, as it had done under Napoleon. Three points about this elite should be borne in mind when their intervention in urban space is being considered. One is that this was not a closed group but one whose composition was evolving rapidly in this period: a number of new banking houses were established during the boom of the early 1820s, major figures failed during the ensuing crisis. Another is that it seems certain that the group's capital base was increasing.³⁸ A third is that their activities were unquestionably expanding. The elite thus participated in government loan flotations, public works,³⁹ integrated concerns in the metallurgical industry⁴⁰ and were even prepared to back grander proposals that in the end failed to secure government authorisation, like Laffitte's 1821 and 1825 plans for investment companies, the consortium to wide Paris streets⁴¹ or

³⁸ Though we cannot say by how much. The André and Cottier bank, to cite but one instance of a bank that played a significant role in urban speculation, capitalized at 720,000 francs in 1808, 2.4 million in 1819 and 4.8 million in 1826. A. N. 44 AQ 1 (fonds de la Banque de Neufville). We are grateful to the Banque de Neufville, Schlumberger, Mallet, for permission to consult these archives.

³⁹ In canals for example. Of the 190.7 millions that private enterprise invested in canals between 1814 and 1848, 70.5% came from Paris. HELMUT GROSSKREUTZ, *Privatkapital und Kanalbau in Frankreich 1814-1848: Eine Fallstudie zur Rolle der Banken der französischen Industrialisierung*, Berlin 1977, tables 22 and 42.

⁴⁰ From 1822-3 onwards. BERTRAND GILLE, *La sidérurgie française au XIX^e siècle*, Geneva 1968, pp. 48 ff.

⁴¹ Proposed in May 1824, this company was to have been capitalized at 250 millions. A. DES CILLEULS, *Histoire de l'administration parisienne*, Paris 1900, vol. I, p. 504. (We have found no trace of this project in Parisian archives.)

the company to build a horse-drawn railway from Paris to Le Havre. Such willingness to bear risk did not always bear fruit, as was the case, at least in the short run, with investments in the iron industry and as was to be the case with intervention in ports and *entrepôts*. The elite's involvement in public works in the capital was also encouraged by the Prefect of the Seine, the Comte de Chabrol, who was prepared to seek the collaboration of private enterprise for major undertakings like canals, bridges across the river, residential quarters, as well as less costly enterprises like gas-lighting and omnibuses.⁴²

Most importantly, however, any understanding of the burgeoning of port and warehouse schemes and of the backing they secured from influential members of the business elite has to be based on an awareness of two further circumstances: one was what to many contemporaries appeared to be the rapidly changing potential of water transport and the other was the promise that new commercial legislation could transform the capital into a leading centre for the re-export trade. Such expectations help explain the optimism of port and *entrepôt* promoters; uncertainties as to future patterns of trade and transport help explain the risks involved.

Water transport both within and around the capital and between Paris and existing and potential markets were affected by two factors. They were affected, first, by the failure to improve the navigability of rivers — and the Seine above all — and, second, by the building of canals in the 1820s. Optimism as to the possibilities that canals opened up was fanned both by the

⁴² This willingness was based on Chabrol's own desire to foster the rapid development of the capital. JEAN TULARD, *L'administration de Paris...*, p. 572, speaks of Chabrol as having "un vigoureux optimisme pré-saint-simonien." Chabrol's desire to collaborate with the business elite was also based on his limited funds, given the indebtedness that resulted from two occupations and the restrictions imposed by the 1818 law on municipal borrowing. Geneviève Massa-Gille, *Histoire des emprunts...*, p. 105.

launching of canal projects that were even more ambitious than those envisaged in Becquey's 1820-22 plan and, to a lesser extent, by the attempts to begin steam navigation on French rivers.

River transport in the Paris region itself had two drawbacks. One was the existence of a large number of river ports none of which combined all the advantages of location and land communications that would have conferred primacy.⁴³ The other was related: the difficulty of river navigation within the city itself that limited through-traffic to semi-laden boats and wood floats downstream and to unladen boats in the other direction.⁴⁴ Not until 1832-3 was a detailed and accurate study of the river in Paris carried out⁴⁵ and not until the 1840s were funds voted to carry out major improvements.

Despite these difficulties and in part because of them, a new canal system⁴⁶ was built which, from the mid-1820s onwards, was profoundly to affect transport and even the economic geography of the Paris region. The Ourcq was canalised to bring water to the city and to the new basin at La Villette. The Saint-Denis canal linked this basin to the Seine below Paris and the Saint-Martin joined La Villette to the Seine above Paris at the new port of the Arsenal. By 1818, when the administration had already spent 24 million francs and it was estimated that completion of the

⁴³ For the lower Seine: La Briche, Sèvres, Puteaux, Neuilly, Saint-Nicolas, d'Orsay. For the upper Seine: Charenton (new facilities built 1824-8), Bercy, La Gare, quai Saint-Bernard.

⁴⁴ For the technical problems of the river in Paris in the 1820s see tables XVI and IXX in *Recherches statistiques sur la ville de Paris...*, vol. II, Paris 1823. For the continuing difficulties, see notes drawn up by the engineer Michal in 1846 and 1853 in A. N. F^o 6814 (Basse-Seine 1841-1867) and F^o 6729. It was estimated that traffic in 1844 consisted of only 1,700 wood floats and 950 half-laden boats downstream and 700 empty boats upstream. (Extrait du rapport fait au nom de la Commission de la Chambre des députés..., 1845, *ibid.*).

⁴⁵ By Bérigny. Report, January 1833. A. N. F^o 6813 (Basse-Seine 1814-1841).

⁴⁶ The history of the Paris canals remains to be written. Sources are: A. N. F^o 7032-3 and 10125-6 (plans); B. H. V. P. Ms 28 and 29, papers of the engineer P.-S. GIRARD; A. P. Collection Lazare. See also Ville de Paris, *Recueil de pièces relatives aux canaux de la Ville de Paris*, Paris 1880.

network would require the same amount again,⁴⁷ Chabrol appealed for funds to the Parisian business elite. It was thanks to their enthusiastic response that the canals were completed between 1821 and 1825.⁴⁸ Because of the spacious quay and storage facilities, the moderate dues charged and the ease of access to right-bank centres of commerce and industry, the new canal system proved an immediate success. Built in the expectation that a maximum of 3,800 boats would use them, the canals were handling 7,800 a year by 1841,⁴⁹ by which time they took 76 percent of lower Seine traffic to Paris and 59 percent of that from the upper Seine.⁵⁰ This success and the topographical advantages of the Saint-Denis plain accentuated trends in the spatial development of the capital. Industrial activity was little developed along the canals⁵¹ and in the inner suburbs to the north and north-west of Paris in the 1820s. From then onwards, however, communes in this area experienced rapid population growth⁵² and industrial development.⁵³ By 1843 Victor Considérant, candidate for the

⁴⁷ P.-S. GIRARD, *Mémoires sur le canal de l'Ourcq et la distribution de ses eaux...*, Paris 1831, 2 vols., vol. I, p. 220; *Moniteur universel*, 8 May 1818.

⁴⁸ The shorter Saint-Maur canal that saved shipping the 12.9 km. loop in the Marne near Paris was also completed in 1825.

⁴⁹ "Notes sur les projets d'amélioration de la navigation de la rivière de Seine," unsigned and undated [1842]. A. N. F¹ 6816 (Basse-Seine 1814-1841). By 1828 the canal traffic was already 3,585 boats.

⁵⁰ Statistics for 1844. Upper Seine figure excludes the 279,560 tons of wood floated to Paris on the upper Seine. Note by Michal, n. d., A. N. F¹ 6729.

⁵¹ As shown in detail on the engineer's map for building the canals. A. N. F¹ 10125 (plans). For some indication of early speculative building along the canals and especially around La Villette, see P.-S. GIRARD, "Mémoire sur les canaux de Saint-Denis et de Saint-Martin," n. d. B. H. V. P. Ms. 28

⁵² Thus La Villette's population increased from 1,640 in 1817 to 4,938 in 1831 and to 9,199 ten years later. See statistics for growth of inner suburbs in ELSIE CANFORA-ARGUNDOÑA and ROGER H. GUERRAND, *La répartition de la population, les conditions de logement des classes ouvrières à Paris au XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1976, tables, pp. 233-60.

⁵³ For a brief sketch of the industrial development of these suburbs, see *Evolution de la géographie industrielle de Paris...*, vol. I, pp. 77-83 and 104-6. See also J.-P. BRUNET, "L'industrialisation de la région de Saint-Denis: histoire du développement d'une banlieue," *Acta geographica*, 1970, pp. 223-60 and GÉRARD JACQUEMET,

Municipal Council in the left-bank tenth arrondissement, could call these suburbs "vigoureux parasites" and lament that "l'aval et l'intérieur de Paris ont été, par la construction des canaux du nord-est, et par l'obstruction de la Seine intra-muros, sacrifiés au développement exagéré du nord et de l'est."⁵⁴

The completion of the new system did not immediately remove uncertainties as to traffic patterns in the Paris region because if the triumph of the Paris canals was evident by the 1840s, it appeared by no means inevitable in the first decade of their existence. One reason for this was that it was not clear that the width of canal locks, fixed during the Empire,⁵⁵ would be sufficient to accommodate all river traffic. The 400-ton river boats which had disappeared during the Empire had begun to return after 1815 and the new steam paddle-boats that were being tried on the Seine were also too wide to use the canals. We must also remember that projectors of new ports and dock facilities had to juggle with a number of other uncertainties, the principal of which--the unprecedented increases in traffic notwithstanding⁵⁶--was the poor navigability of the lower Seine between Paris and the ports of Rouen and Le Havre.⁵⁷ Proposals

"Belleville aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles: une méthode d'analyse de la croissance urbaine à Paris," *Annales E. S. C.*, 30, 1975, pp. 819-43.

⁵⁴ *Note sur les intérêts généraux de la ville de Paris et spécialement du dixième arrondissement*, Paris, n. d. [1843]. At the time of the publication of the pamphlet *Considérant* was a candidate for the Municipal Council.

⁵⁵ The law of 21 germinal, an XIII, fixed the width of Paris canal locks at 7m.80. The decision was based on the size of boats using the Seine at the time. For an analysis of the consequences, see *Journal du Commerce*, 11 July 1832.

⁵⁶ Contemporary statistics are singularly difficult to use because many contemporary sources use numbers of boats without indicating tonnage and some make no allowance for Oise traffic that arrived at Pontoise. It would seem, however, that traffic between Rouen and Paris at least doubled 1818-1825. The *Journal du Commerce* (29 September 1832) gives the increase as 808 to 1595 boats. This is based on government figures.

⁵⁷ There were, however, improvements in services and organization which marginally reduced costs. It was calculated in March 1835 that average freight rates between Rouen and Paris had fallen 25% and average journey time by 20%. Report by Cavenne and others to Legrand, March 1, 1835, A. N. F^o 6813. J.-C. TOUTAIN wrongly claims

for major works between Le Havre and Rouen⁵⁸ as well as less ambitious projects for river improvements between Rouen and Paris had long been put forward and further studies were made and improvement schemes formulated in the 1820s.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, not until Poirée's perfection of the movable dam in the mid-1830s was any real progress made in river improvement.⁶⁰ In 1835, then, the Paris Chamber of Commerce was still voicing familiar complaints when it declared: "On a peine à croire que la navigation d'un grand fleuve, aboutissant à la capitale du royaume, soit encore dans un tel état de barbarie."⁶¹

There were still other uncertainties. One of these was the impact the government's canal-building programme would have on the general transport network that linked Paris to other regions. It was generally believed, though, that these canals would greatly improve Paris's links with Belgium and the north,⁶² with the centre and with Alsace. Optimism was also generated by projects for canals to be constructed by private enterprise: the Seine-Rhine canal and, above all, the Seine maritime canal, plans

that freight rates only fell after 1837. "Les transports en France de 1830 à 1965," *Economies et sociétés*, série AF VIII, 1967, pp. 100-113.

⁵⁸ Best analysis of earlier projects from Lamblardie onwards is Canal maritime de la Seine, *Rapports de la Commission des Inspecteurs des Ponts-et-Chaussées sur plans et projets...*, Paris 1818, pp. 143-221.

⁵⁹ Between 1823 and 1826 the *Ponts-et-Chaussées* spent 100,000 francs on studies. In 1821 the Saint-Denis Canal Company proposed to make improvements at La Morue, Vernon and Poses; in 1824 the government engineer Polonceau proposed a 12-million franc scheme (A. N. F¹ 6813); in 1826 two entrepreneurs, Chaumette and Frossard, also put forward plans [A. N. F¹ 7105 (Canal maritime de la Seine)].

⁶⁰ "Notice sur les projets d'amélioration de cette rivière," n. d. and unsigned [1842], 54 pp., A. N. F¹ 6816 (Basse-Seine 1826); "Notice pour M. le Ministre des travaux publics sur les travaux de la basse Seine," 21 May 1853, A. N. F¹ 6741.

⁶¹ A. N. F¹ 6813. For earlier detailed descriptions of the navigation hazards of the Seine, see COIC and A. DULEAU, *Reconnaissance de la Seine de Rouen à Saint-Denis, en 1829 et 1830...*, Paris 1830, pp. 39-48. (Two trips made at the request of the City Council). Copy in A. N. F¹ 7105.

⁶² Thus, thanks largely to waterway improvements, transport costs for Mons coal to Paris fell by 57% between 1824 and 1843. HUBERT WATELET, *Une industrialisation sans développement: le bassin de Mons et le charbonnage du Grand-Hornu du XVIII^e au milieu du XIX^e siècle*, Ottawa 1980, pp. 240-1.

for both of which were put forward from 1824-5 onwards. The hopes that steam navigation would bring about cost reductions were based on the impressive number of steam-boat companies that were set up in the 1820s to ply rivers.⁶³ The immediate results were generally disappointing but on the Seine steam boats and steam tugs gradually increased in importance, at first between Le Havre and Rouen and then as far as Paris.⁶⁴

It was thus not only increases in traffic flows but the various plans and the prospects for improving water carriage that encouraged interest in improving Parisian port and warehouse facilities. Speculative interest was heightened by yet another factor: optimistic forecasts as to the potential of the bonded warehouse that Paris was authorized to set up in February 1832. From 1814 the Parisian business elite, spearheaded by its Chamber of Commerce, campaigned to secure the *entrepôt* privilege that had previously only been granted to the seaports.⁶⁵ That it took eighteen years, five campaigns (1814-5, 1819, 1824-5, 1827-8 and 1830-2) and two government inquiries (in 1819 and 1831) before the government was persuaded to grant Paris an *entrepôt* is eloquent testimony to the importance that was attached to the question not only in the capital but also in the seaports which led the determined opposition to Paris.⁶⁶

⁶³ Thirteen joint-stock companies were organized for steamships on French rivers, 1821-33. CHARLES E. FREEDEMAN, *Joint-Stock Enterprise in France, 1807-1867*, Chapel Hill 1979, pp. 30-31. For projects on the Seine, see A. N. F¹² 6764 and 6771.

⁶⁴ By 1845 steamboats towed 75,000 tons to Paris. Notes drawn up by Michal, n. d. A. N. 6729. For an understanding of the lack of success of steam transport for freight in the 1820s, see F.-N. MELLET and M. TOURASSE, *Essai sur les bateaux à vapeur appliqués à la navigation intérieure et maritime de l'Europe*, Paris 1828-9, pp. 6-15, 16-18 and 107-111.

⁶⁵ And Lyon.

⁶⁶ Sources for the *entrepôt* campaign are A. C. C. P.: minutes of the Chamber and 652-I; A. N. F¹² 2594-7 (Douanes: *entrepôts*) and F¹² 6397 (Transit par terre: *préparation des lois*). The major drawback of these sources is the absence of proper statistics. It was only from 1831 that the government began collecting statistics on *entrepôts* and from 1832 on transit. Thus for the colonial goods that came to Paris the only statistics we have are those for an atypical five-month period in 1814-15 that was

In retrospect, the importance contemporaries attributed to the potential of the bonded warehouse seems surprising. For its supporters in Paris it promised to confer two advantages. It would reduce some manufacturing costs because a number of local industries — sugar-refining, cabinet-making, cotton manufacture, for instance — used highly-taxed colonial goods.⁶⁷ But for an audacious minority a bonded warehouse offered much more: the possibility that Paris could displace London and Holland as the colonial goods redistribution centre for Continental Europe in general and the Rhineland; southern Germany, Switzerland and perhaps Italy in particular.⁶⁸

The furore, the exaggerated hopes and fears to which the *entrepôt* controversy gave rise can best be understood if it is remembered that the bonded warehouse was a recent innovation⁶⁹ and that it remained a largely untried instrument when peace returned. Moreover, re-exports, mainly from the Atlantic seaports, had been a vital element in the French balance of trade in the eighteenth century⁷⁰ and under the Restoration colonial goods remained by far the most important items on the import list.⁷¹

published in *Recherches statistiques sur la Ville de Paris...*, III, Paris 1826, table 129. For a brief analysis of the controversy, see BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, "Capital and Provinces in Conflict: the Debate on Paris' Place in the French and European Economy, 1814-1832," *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, Lawrence, Kansas, 1982, pp. 308-319.

⁶⁷ Paris sugar-refiners to Paris Chamber of Commerce, 9 February 1819, A. N. F¹² 2594; cotton-spinners to the Minister of Finance, January 1825, A. N. F¹² 2596.

⁶⁸ The most persuasive and influential apology for Paris as a redistribution centre is D.-L. RODET, *Du commerce extérieur et de la question d'un entrepôt à Paris*, Paris 1825.

⁶⁹ The bonded warehouse had been introduced in 1803. Nowadays but a minor aspect of international commerce, its purpose is to hold goods in bond, and thereby either delay payment of customs dues or eliminate payment altogether on goods re-exported.

⁷⁰ MICHEL MORINEAU, "Quelques recherches relatives à la balance du commerce extérieur français au XVIII^e siècle: ou cette fois un égale deux," in PIERRE LÉON (ed.) *Aires et structures...*, pp. 1-46; R. ROMANO, "Documenti e Prime Considerazione interno alla 'Balance du Commerce' della Francia dal 1716 al 1780," in *Studi in onore di Armando Saporì*, Milan 1964, pp. 1267-1300.

⁷¹ They made up one-third of the value of French imports in the 1827-36 period.

And it was by no means evident, in the hesitant years of the Restoration, that the loss of Santo Domingo and British domination of extra-European commerce precluded any recovery of France's colonial re-export trade.⁷² Those who believed that Paris could rival London in this regard advocated a liberalization of transit regulations, pressed for the bonded warehouse privilege for the Seine maritime and Seine-Rhine canals that promised to facilitate greatly transit between Le Havre and Alsace.⁷³ over the Rhine route.⁷⁴ Their faith was fortified by the projects for the Seine maritime and Seine-Rhine canals that promised to greatly facilitate transit between Le Havre and Alsace.⁷⁴

It is in the context of these changing realities and expectations, then, that the projects for river ports and warehouse facilities have to be understood. The failure of these projects is to be explained both by the depression and projectors' miscalculations as to short-term patterns of change.

III

The first of the three port projects of the Restoration was that of Grenelle.⁷⁵ The Grenelle quarter planned by Léonard Violet, a

Tableau décennal du commerce de la France avec ses colonies et les puissances étrangères par l'Administration des douanes, Paris 1838, pp. LII-LIII. In 1829 they paid 43.7% of total customs duties. C.-L.-G. AUDIFFRET, "Rapport au Roi sur l'Administration des finances," 30 March 1830 in *Système financier de la France*, Paris 1840, vol. II, p. 171.

⁷² "Aujourd'hui," wrote Chaptal in 1819, "comme aux premiers jours de son enfance, le commerce est réduit à des essais, à des entreprises hasardeuses: il est forcé de s'ouvrir de nouvelles routes, de chercher de nouveaux débouchés..." *De l'industrie française*, Paris 1819, vol. I, p. 3.

⁷³ In 1825 Rodet estimated that the French axis enjoyed a 1% cost advantage and the benefit of greater speed. The Rhine route costs were raised by trans-shipments and high river dues. D.-L. RODET, *Du commerce extérieur...*, p. 120.

⁷⁴ Apologists of the Seine and Rhine canal projects calculated they would confer a 25% cost advantage. CHARLES DUPIN, *Les forces productives et commerciales de la France*, Paris 1827, vol. II, p. 303; STÉPHANE FLACHAT, *Du canal maritime de Rouen à Paris*, Paris 1829, pp. 112-39.

⁷⁵ Established in an underdeveloped part of the Vaugirard commune, Grenelle

building entrepreneur, in collaboration with Letellier, another building entrepreneur, and the banker Louis Perrée, was the largest of all the *lotissements dirigés* of the 1820s.⁷⁶ This speculation, however, differed from others in the period not only in its size and location on the left bank but in that, in the eyes of its promoters, it was to have a dual vocation as a new residential and as a commercial quarter. Two companies were therefore established to develop the area. The one was the *Société des terrains et bâtimens de Grenelle*. Though the land purchases dated back to May 1824, this company was officially established in 1826 and dissolved in 1831. The other was the *Compagnie des pont, gare et pont de Grenelle*, which secured government approval in 1825.⁷⁷ One purpose of this joint-stock company--and it was one of the first such companies to seek to do so⁷⁸--was to build a bridge in return for the right to levy tolls. This bridge joined Grenelle and Passy and was opened in 1827. A second purpose was to establish protected mooring facilities and a port at Grenelle which was to capture traffic from other river ports downstream and within the city. Its founders not only expected their port would become the site of the bonded warehouse the capital was seeking but they even hoped that it would be the terminal for the projected Seine maritime canal, in the early plans for which Grenelle was the favoured arrival point.⁷⁹ The overriding purpose, though, was to

became an independent commune in 1830. In 1832 the new commune had a population of 1,700. *Almanach municipal et commercial de Vaugirard et de Grenelle*, Paris 1832, p. 64.

⁷⁶ Sources for the Grenelle development are A. N. F¹² 6792 (*Société des pont, gare et port de Grenelle*); A. P. 75¹ 26 and série DZ (Collection Lazare). See also LUCIEN LAMBEAU, *Histoire des communes annexées à Paris en 1859, Grenelle*, Paris 1914.

⁷⁷ The *acte de société*, however, dates back to 30 April 1825. A. N. F¹² 6792. The company was finally approved 26 July 1826. *Bulletin des lois*, 8th series, 1826.

⁷⁸ Other joint-stock companies to build bridges date from 1818. The most recent in the Paris area were the ill-fated Invalides suspension bridge designed by Navier and built by private enterprise (1824-1826) and the Asnières bridge (1826).

⁷⁹ This is made clear in a number of company publications. See "Note à M. Jacques Lefebvre, président de la Chambre de Commerce de Paris, des Administrateurs de la Compagnie des pont, gare et port de Grenelle," 10 December 1831. A. C. P. 652-I. In

attract industries and commerce to Grenelle and thus to profit from land sales. This is clear from the financial base of the joint-stock company set up to build the bridge and the port. Though this company was capitalized at seven million francs, only 2.7 millions of this was for the installations. The rest represented the land the founders brought to the company.⁸⁰

Their enterprise did not succeed and their port, opened in 1828, was little used. Though they had expected an annual yield of 150,000 francs from the bridge and port, returns averaged only 18,400 francs between 1827 and 1852.⁸¹ Worse, the land sales account that was to have been the most lucrative element in the speculation, did not yield any early returns: between 1826 and 1834 the company managed to sell only 2.4 percent of its land holdings.⁸² This failure is to be attributed to miscalculations as to their chances of securing the bonded warehouse and the terminal of the projected maritime canal, and, more importantly, to the success of the Paris canal network and to the opening of a rival and better-situated river port between Clichy and Saint-Ouen, to the north-west of the capital.

This new river port was the creation of a leading member of the Parisian business elite, the banker Ardoin.⁸³ From early 1825 onwards Ardoin bought up no less than 268 acres of cheap land with the purpose of establishing a protected basin and dock facility where the water level would be kept constant by means of

both Dupin's and Bérigny's early plans, Grenelle had been proposed as a possible terminal for the maritime canal. CHARLES BÉRIGNY, *Navigations maritime du Havre à Paris, ou mémoire sur les moyens de faire remonter jusqu' à Paris tous les bâtiments de mer qui peuvent entrer dans le port du Havre*, Paris 1826, pp. 42-56.

⁸⁰ They brought 43,000 *toises*, which independent estimators valued at 4.4 million francs (that is 100,000 francs more). Guenepin and Vasserot to the Minister of the Interior, 5 May 1826. A. P. 75' 26.

⁸¹ LUCIEN LAMBEAU, *Histoire des communes annexées...*, pp. 105-25.

⁸² Computed from semi-annual reports to the shareholders in A. N. F^o 6792. By January 1831 only one sale— for 21,000 francs— had been made.

⁸³ J.-A. ARDOIN (1779-1854) was associated with NICOLAS HUBARD between 1825 and 1827. From 1827 he joined with Alexandre Jolly and Jules-François Hennecart. Actes de société, A. P. D^oU^o 9.

a steam pump.⁸⁴ The lock to the basin was to be large enough to accommodate all river boats, and, to attract traffic, the facility was to have been completed by the construction of a railway to Paris. By the time a royal decree approved the building of the port Saint-Ouen in June 1826 work was already under way.

Though none of the papers of the company have survived, it appears certain that the port was built in anticipation of the maritime canal being approved. Ardoin was himself associated with the canal project in two ways. He chaired the consultative committee of merchants which reported favourably on the commercial prospects of the canal in 1826-7⁸⁵ and, as we shall see, from 1825 onwards he participated in land purchases in the Gennevilliers plain opposite Saint-Ouen which was the secret site finally chosen as the canal terminal. Like Grenelle and other port projects, port Saint-Ouen had land speculation as an essential ingredient. Thus, though the company formed for the port was capitalized at 10 millions, eight millions of this took the form of land that the Ardoin bank and its associates brought to the company.

Like Grenelle, too, port Saint-Ouen was not an immediate success. In its early years it failed to yield profits because of its eccentric situation and the incline of the road to Paris through Montmartre. But it failed most of all because of the opposition of the Saint-Denis Canal Company which, with the City of Paris, brought a suit against the port Saint-Ouen claiming that the latter had failed to secure proper authorization before beginning construction and that the size of its lock was in contravention of

⁸⁴ The idea of solving the problem of variable river levels by closed basins and steam pumps was an old one. Already in 1790 Périet had proposed a new port at the fossés de la Bastille where water would have been kept at a constant level by means of one of his steam pumps. JACQUES-CONSTANTIN PÉRIET, *Mémoire sur l'établissement d'une gare à Paris*, Paris 1790 (pamphlet).

⁸⁵ Between August 1826 and February 1827 Ardoin assembled the statistics on goods traffic on the lower Seine. STÉPHANE FLACHAT, *Du canal maritime de la Seine et de l'entrepôt de Paris*, Paris 1827, pp. 110-22 (B. H. V. P.).

the regulations established during the Empire for navigation in Paris and on the Seine.⁸⁶ Though the canal company lost its case, it succeeded in halting completion, keeping the port closed for three years — until early in 1830 — and forcing the Saint-Ouen Company to adjourn plans to build storage facilities at the basin and a railway to Paris. Indeed, Ardoin's heavy investment in the enterprise was the principal cause of his bankruptcy in 1831,⁸⁷ one of the most spectacular failures of the crisis. His financial distress and inability to sell land bought around the port impelled him into signing a series of agreements with the Tivoli and Saint-Lazare developments to secure the bonded warehouse site⁸⁸ and to build a railway from Tivoli to Saint-Ouen and to Saint-Denis that was to be the possible rail-head of a trunk line to Rouen.⁸⁹

There was a third and even more ambitious project for a river port: that put forward between 1827 and 1833 by the *Ponts-et-Chaussées* engineer, J.-L.-E. Cordier,⁹⁰ for a basin and canals on the still undeveloped Ivry plain to the south-east of the capital.⁹¹ At its most grandiose and at an estimated cost of 35 millions, this unsuccessful proposal had four elements. The first was the

⁸⁶ *Au Roi. En son Conseil d'etat. Requête d'intervention pour la Ville de Paris, poursuites et diligences...*, Paris, n. d. 1829, pamphlet.

⁸⁷ He had liabilities of 4.2 millions and assets of 6.8 millions but his assets were tied up in the Saint-Ouen Company. A. P. D^U (1831).

⁸⁸ Ardoin also proposed Saint-Ouen as the permanent or temporary site of the bonded warehouse. ARDOIN, *Du port Saint-Ouen considéré comme la localité la plus convenable à l'Entrepôt de Paris*, Paris, 22 May 1832.

⁸⁹ With Riant, Tivoli property-owner, he proposed a line to Saint-Ouen and Saint-Denis in December 1833. In January 1835 he joined Laffitte and Jourdan to propose a railway to Rouen, the first section of which was to be a line to Poissy via Saint-Denis. A. N. F¹ 8862 (chemins de fer, avant-projets et et projets: réseau de l'Ouest).

⁹⁰ Cordier had already been government engineer for the Saint-Quentin and other canals and was appointed divisional inspector in 1826. In June 1832, however, he and the even more critical Jousselin, were dismissed for their political views and their opinions on the respective roles of the *Ponts-et-Chaussées* and private enterprise. A. N. F¹ 2197¹ and 2249¹ (dossiers du personnel).

⁹¹ The commune of Ivry had a population of just under 3,000 in 1831. ELSIE CANFORA-ARGANDOÑA and ROGER H. GUERRAND, *La répartition de la population...*, p. 235; JEAN BASTIÉ, *La croissance de la banlieue...*, p. 94-5.

construction of a 12-kilometre canal to improve navigation on the Marne between Chennevières and the Port-à-l'Anglais. The second was the building of a barrage and canal to a vast new basin on the Ivry plain near the Port-à-l'Anglais. The third was the continuation of the canal from the new basin to the Jardin des Plantes using what was to be the route of entry adopted by the Paris-Orléans railway. The final element was the construction of a mainly underground canal that would have linked the port at the Jardin des Plantes with the Grenelle plain, thus completing a rival route on the left bank to the recently completed Seine canals on the right.⁹² Cordier, who had been preparing this chimerical plan since 1824, was soon forced by the deepening depression to limit his proposals to the more modest but still ambitious basin and dock facility on the Ivry plain. Inquiries into the project were held between 1829 and 1833 and the plan obtained support from the Ivry Municipal Council. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of its backers waned because the utility of a new port could not be demonstrated when neither Grenelle nor Charenton, despite its improved facilities, was hardly used,⁹³ and because of the uncertainty as to the possible impact of the completion of new canals linked to the upper Seine.

We know very little of the financial backing for this project by a respected government engineer. The grand project he first proposed was undoubtedly out of step with the straitened

⁹² *Mémoire sur les projets présentés pour la jonction de la Marne à la Seine, la dérivation de la Seine et les Docks ou bassins éclusés à établir dans les plaines de Choisy, d'Ivry et de Grenelle*, Paris 1827 (the full proposal); *Deuxième mémoire...*, Paris 1829; *Troisième mémoire...*, Paris 1829; *Dépenses et produits des docks ou bassins et du canal de navigation de la Seine à la Seine dans la plaine d'Ivry*, Paris 1828; *Description, dépenses et produits du barrage de la Seine au Port-à-l'Anglais*, Paris 1829; *Dépenses et revenus des docks d'Ivry*, Paris 1829. For the submissions and government examinations of these projects, see A. N. F¹⁶ 6726 (Seine fleuve, 1811-1851). The Cordier plan surfaced again in 1841 but was rejected by the *Ponts-et-Chaussées* (3 July 1841).

⁹³ To avoid mooring dues, coal boats still anchored by the Ile Louviers and boats loaded with wine moored outside the barrière de Bercy. Besides, boats and wood-floats preferred staying outside Paris ports until sale of their cargoes was assured.

circumstances of the Parisian economy and his plans posed technical problems. Yet three aspects of Cordier's plan merit mention. The first is that he criticized the residential developments of the time as serving no useful purpose and the building of the Paris canals as conferring an unfair advantage on the right bank.⁵⁴ Second, the size of the new basin and the facilities to be built near Ivry were based not only on recent increases in upper Seine traffic but on the expectation that the new port would be the site of the bonded warehouse.⁵⁵ Thirdly, the Cordier plan shared with other port projects the land speculation that was perhaps the most important aspect for his backers. From the different combinations that Cordier proposed to the administration, it is clear that the plan's backers signed a series of conditional agreements with major landowners in the region of Ivry and that they hoped to make large profits from land sales once the basin had been completed.⁵⁶

IV

The second of the three projects launched in this period was the most ambitious: that for a maritime canal to link Paris with

⁵⁴ "Avec les mêmes sommes," he wrote, "on aurait ouvert dix canaux de Languedoc et enrichi dix provinces." *Mémoire sur les projets présentés...*, pp. 4-6. His plan aimed not only to revivify the commerce and industry of the left bank but to irrigate and fertilize the soils of the Ivry and Choisy plains and thus encourage market gardening and to prevent flooding and improve the notoriously defective water supplies to the left bank arrondissements.

⁵⁵ It was to become "l'entrepôt central du commerce du royaume." CORDIER, *Mémoire...*, p. 110.

⁵⁶ This was made clear in Cordier's original 1827 project (*Mémoire...*, p. 24) and later proposals. See, for instance, submission signed by Piard, 21 August 1830, which announced that the principal property-owners of the Ivry plain had joined with other (unnamed) capitalists to form a company to carry out Cordier's plans. A. N. F¹⁴ 6726. In his February 1829 proposal, Cordier calculated total costs at 15.5 million francs, which included 5.76 millions for 160 *hectares* of land. He expected to be able to sell half of this land for over 18 millions. CORDIER, *Description, dépenses et produits...*

Rouen and Le Havre.⁷⁷ That this project has now largely been forgotten does not mean that it was but an extreme example of the illusory schemas that surfaced on the upswell of confidence of the mid-1820s.⁷⁸ Though it was not the first maritime canal to Paris to be proposed⁷⁹ and, as is well known, it was certainly not to be the last, there are reasons for believing that we should take it as seriously as did many contemporaries. As we have shown, the plan was a major catalyst of the port plans of the Restoration and its backers themselves planned to create a major new port on the Gennevilliers plain. The proposal, which dates from October 1824, exercised engineers, merchants and public inquiries down to 1832. During this time it was deemed both commercially and technically feasible. Once the government had authorized its promoters to proceed with studies, they set up a steering committee composed of régime notables, which chose a consultative committee of Paris merchants to study traffic on the Seine and determine canal tariffs and possible profits, and a committee of engineers to plan the route and estimate construction costs. The merchants' committee, after the fullest study ever undertaken of goods transport on the lower Seine and basing itself on existing rather than projected traffic, concluded that the canal

⁷⁷ The records of the company have not survived but there are two dossiers on the project and inquiries into it in A. N. F¹ 7105 and 7106 (Canal maritime de la Seine).

⁷⁸ This was certainly an argument used by its opponets outside Paris. Thus in 1826 the Consul général of the Seine-inférieure said that the project bore "l'empreinte du caractère aventurier de notre âge." Deliberation of 13 December 1826. A. N. F¹ 7106.

⁷⁹ Seine maritime canals had been proposed in the eighteenth century: by Passemant and Bellart (1765-9); by Isnard (1787-1790) and by Ducrest (1806). A. N. F¹ 188 and 708 (projets de canaux). Etienne Guillemot, "Le premier projet de Paris-port de mer..." *Fédération des sociétés historiques et archéologiques de Paris et de l'Île de France, Mémoires*, 2, 1950, pp. 229-63; PIERRE DARDEL, *Les débuts de Paris-port de mer au XVIII^e siècle*, Rouen 1954, pamphlet. From the 1770s onwards there were also projects for a canal from Dieppe. A. N. F¹ 690 (Canal de Dieppe à Paris 1790-1810); J.-M. DUTENS, *Histoire de la navigation intérieure*, Paris 1829, vol. II, pp. 198-218. A Dieppe-Oise canal was approved in 1822 but the adjudication in March 1825 was unsuccessful.

that was to cost 160 millions — roughly the same as de Lesseps originally calculated the Suez canal would cost — would yield a 12 percent annual return.¹⁰⁰ In 1829 the always exigent *Ponts-et-Chaussées* pronounced the plan technically acceptable.¹⁰¹ A further indication of the seriousness of the plan is that, though no company was ever formally established nor any canal ever built, the backers secured sufficient funds to spend a million francs just on preparatory studies.¹⁰²

The Seine maritime canal, indeed, spawned a similar project for a canal between Paris and Strasbourg.¹⁰³ Almost immediately after the royal decree authorizing the study of the Seine project, a second decree, dated 25 March 1825, granted permission for studies of a Seine-Rhine canal. It is clear that this second scheme was the result of the first because its promoters proposed the same system of steering and consultative committees the Seine

¹⁰⁰ The committee was composed of leading members of the Parisian business elite: the bankers Ardoin and Vital-Roux, Larreguy, who was associated with Laffitte, Lafond fils, a wine merchant, and Drouillard of Blaque, Drouillard et Certain, the banking house. The steering committee was composed of the Polignacs, Beugnot, Vitrolles, Mollien, Dupin and Berryer. Others joined later. *Soumissionnaires* to Becquey, 19 March 1825 A. N. F¹⁴ 7106. The printed reports of the merchants' committee are in F¹⁴ 10138 (2) (*plans de canaux: canal maritime de la Seine*). The company published its own calculations in 1826. *Canal maritime de la Seine, Tarifs et produits du canal et des ports, bassins, magasins et entrepôts de Paris, Rouenn, et autres villes de la vallée de la Seine*, Paris 1826. Copy in A. N. F¹⁴ 10138 (1).

¹⁰¹ The steering committee chose three distinguished engineers, De Prony, Dutens and Cavenne, to report on the canal's technical feasibility. Their favourable report, *Canal maritime. Rapports de la Commission des Inspecteurs des Ponts-et-Chaussées, sur les plans et projets présentés par les soumissionnaires...*, was published in 1828. Copy in F¹⁴ 7105. In January and again in August 1829 the canal commission of the Ponts-et-Chaussées pronounced the project feasible. *Deliberations* of 2 January and 22 August 1829. A. N. F¹⁴ 7106.

¹⁰² By April 1832 the company had spent 900,000 francs. Statement by Odilon Barrot to the Conseil général of the *Ponts-et-Chaussées*, 2 April 1832. A. N. F¹⁴ 7106.

¹⁰³ The Archives Nationales has three files on projects for the Seine-Rhine canal: F¹⁴ 6957 (*Canal de la Marne au Rhin, projets anciens, 1809-1845*); F¹⁴ 7108 (*Canal du Rhin à Paris, 1802-1824*); F¹⁴ 10139 (*cartes et plans*). The original promoters were J.-J. Bouvié, a coal-mine owner, Charles Fessart, a Le Havre merchant, who with his brother was also involved in the Seine maritime canal project, and J.-P. L.-H. Caffin.

project had copied from England.¹⁰⁴ Its promoters also saw their canal as completing the new transit link between Le Havre and Strasbourg.¹⁰⁵ However, this project quickly ran into difficulties. The company remained inactive for over a year after obtaining the royal decree. There were rival projects.¹⁰⁶ Though the proposed route of the canal was more direct than the Canal Monsieur, it was to have as many as 217 locks on its 511-kilometre length. Besides, its promoters were never able to clearly demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Paris Chamber of Commerce and others either its immediate usefulness or profitability.¹⁰⁷

The stimulus to both the Seine maritime canal and the Seine-Rhine project was the increase in goods traffic to and from Paris. The example, however, was given by other maritime canals built or under construction in Britain, Holland and Sweden and by London whose port facilities had been revolutionized since the laying of the foundation stone of the first of its new dock facilities, the West India, in 1800. Other dock companies had subsequently been set up in London and all had proved highly profitable. In 1825, indeed, a proposal was made to build a ship

¹⁰⁴ The engineer Brisson drew up the plans, while J.-C. Davillier, Mallet and Odier examined its commercial prospects. A. N. F¹ 6957.

¹⁰⁵ The memoir the promoters drew up in 1826 calculated that the Le Havre-Strasbourg axis would have a one-third cost advantage and be more rapid than the Antwerp/Rotterdam-Rhine route. "Mémoire sur le projet d'un canal de Paris au Rhin, présenté le 23 août 1826." A. N. F¹ 10139. See footnote 74 above.

¹⁰⁶ There had been a number of earlier projects, such as that of Prault-Saint-Germain in 1804 or that of Robin de Betting (1824) A. N. F¹ 7108. The most serious rival was Albert who submitted his project in 1826. It would appear that once Albert had submitted his project, the Bouvié Company abandoned its own plans in favour of Albert's. See "Notes et observations générales et particulières sur la situation administrative des compagnies Albert et Bouvié...", n. d. A. N. F¹ 6957.

¹⁰⁷ The canal was to cost 71 million francs. Already in January 1827 the Paris Chamber of Commerce questioned whether such a canal was preferable to a railway. The engineer Polonceau, in September 1829, came down in favour of the latter. Chamber de Commerce de Paris, minutes of 10 janvier 1827, A. C. C. P.; "Observations sur le canal proposé de la Seine au Rhin entre Paris et Strasbourg et exposé d'un nouveau projet," signed Polonceau, 2 September 1829. A. N. F¹ 6957.

canal between London and Portsmouth.¹⁰⁸ As early as 1818 so sober a figure as Charles Dupin was already proposing French ports adopt the London dock system and was enthusiastically advocating a Seine maritime canal which, he claimed "suffirait, peut-être, pour changer les destinées commerciales et maritimes de la France."¹⁰⁹ In 1827 Dupin dubbed the two canal projects that would join Le Havre, Paris and Strasbourg, the "Northern Canal" and forecast it would be the French equivalent of the Grand Trunk, Grand Junction and Grand Union canals in England.¹¹⁰

Promoters of the Seine canal project emphasised their canal would confer two advantages on the capital. The elimination of trans-shipments, the low tariffs and ease of transport would reduce the cost of raw materials and foodstuffs in general and in particular the iron and coal in which the Paris basin was deficient. They argued that this would facilitate the further progress of the Parisian metallurgical and machine-building industries that were already growing because know-how and capital were available.¹¹¹ They also stressed that the canal would confirm Paris's vocation as a major redistribution centre for colonial goods.¹¹²

There is, however, another dimension to the Seine maritime canal project, a dimension that ties it even more closely to the business elite's speculation in port and warehouse facilities: from the beginning its promoters planned extensive new dock facilities at the canal's Parisian terminal. Some doubts remain as to

¹⁰⁸ JOSEPH G. BROODBANK, *History of the Port of London*, London 1921, vol. I, pp. 77-162.

¹⁰⁹ *Voyages dans la Grande-Bretagne*, Paris 1824, vol. I, p. 161.

¹¹⁰ *Des forces productives et commerciales de la France*, Paris 1827, vol. II, pp. 287-336.

¹¹¹ See, for instance, the minutes of a meeting of the promoters of the canal on 29 March 1829. A. N. F¹⁴ 7106.

¹¹² This was emphasised on many occasions. See, for one example, *Canal maritime de la Seine. Tarifs et produits du canal*, Paris 1826, minutes of the meeting of 20 April 1826. A. N. F¹⁴ 10138 (1).

whether the canal scheme itself was not too ambitious to secure financial backing — its original backers included only five merchants and a stockbroker.¹¹³ The projected port site, however, early attracted investors. The first plans had the Grenelle plain as the site for the Paris port¹¹⁴ but as early as June 1825 the promoters had secretly decided on the Gennevilliers plain.¹¹⁵ In other words, the terminal was chosen even before the route to Rouen had been determined or the major technical difficulties — the Le Havre Rouen section — been tackled.

That they should have devoted their first energies to the site and lay-out of the new port is understandable. The ship canal had its beginning in a visit to England made by the two originators of the project, Stéphane Flachats and Saint-Fare Bontemps, the purpose of which had been only to study the disposition of the new dock facilities in London. Stéphane Flachats and his half-brother, Eugène, were to be leading advocates of the London system for French ports¹¹⁶ and Eugène Flachats was to design the Paris bonded warehouse and to draw up the first plan for a new port for Marseille at La Joliette.¹¹⁷ The canal's promoters also

¹¹³ The motive force was provided by the young engineer Stéphane Flachats (b. 1802) who achieved fame as a member of the Saint-Simonian sect and fortune in various industrial enterprises. The merchants were Pierre Blaisot, Pierre Debaëque, Nicholas and Charles Fessart and P.-N. Morlière. Demarchy was the stockbroker. A. N. F¹⁴ 7105.

¹¹⁴ Draft of a submission, Decembre 1824. A. N. F¹⁴ 7106. For a moment the promoters seem to have wanted either to bring the canal into the Saint-Lazare quarter or to build a railway form their port because they signed an agreement with the founders of the Saint-Lazare quarter to buy 2,000 *toises* of land for 50 francs the *toise*, land that was valued at 195 francs the *toise*. A. N. 44 AQ 1.

¹¹⁵ Minutes of the steering committee of the canal project, 13 June 1825. These were sent to the *Ponts-et-Chaussées* in August 1829. A. N. F¹⁴ 7106.

¹¹⁶ In 1832 the Flachats, Lamé and Clapeyron advocated that all French ports adopt the London system (including the use of warrants). *Vues politiques et pratiques sur les travaux publics*, Paris 1832, pp. 197-221.

¹¹⁷ EUGÈNE FLACHATS, *Etablissements commerciaux. Docks de Londres. Entrepôts de Paris. Projet de docks de Marseille*, Paris 1836 and *Mémoire pour servir aux examens de l'administration des Ponts-et-Chaussées sur les projets de docks à Marseille*, Paris 1836. The La Joliette project was only approved in 1844.

expected — and in 1829 actually proposed — that their port would be the site of Paris's bonded warehouse.¹¹⁸

They justified their choice of the Gennevilliers plain by pointing to the suitability of a plain surrounded on three sides by the river, the low price of the land as compared with the higher land values and less advantageous elevations between Saint-Denis and Clichy on the opposite bank. They also claimed that communications with the capital either existed — the new Asnières bridge for example — or could be established — by an extension of the canal to a point opposite the new port of Saint-Ouen or a new bridge across the Seine. But most of all, they saw the Gennevilliers terminal as displacing all other lower Seine ports in the Paris region, as the counterpart to an expected concentration of upper Seine traffic to the south-east of the city on the Bercy and Ivry plains.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, they also conceived of their extensive new port as a further stimulus to the increasing commercial and industrial activity to the north and north-east of the capital. To appreciate the daring of such a conception for a port eight kilometres from the centre of Paris, we only have to point to the reaction of the Chamber of Commerce which considered the project too revolutionary for Parisian merchants unaccustomed to having to travel such distances to ports and warehouses.¹²⁰

The most significant aspect of the Gennevilliers plan, however, was that it was a closely guarded secret.¹²¹ For four years canal

¹¹⁸ Canal promoters to Becquey, 24 September and Becquey's reply 30 September 1829. A. N. F¹⁴ 7105.

¹¹⁹ Thereby ending what they called "les embarras, les lenteurs, les inconvéniens de toute nature qui y existent dans les arrivages, les débarquements, les magasinages, les transports." Minutes of a meeting of the canal promoters, 28 July 1829, copy forwarded to the *Ponts-et-Chaussées* in August 1829. A. N. F¹⁴ 7106.

¹²⁰ The Chamber concluded: "De semblables révolutions ne s'improvisent pas, surtout elles ne peuvent être forcées..." Report of 14 July 1830. A. N. F¹² 6823 (*inter alia*, Terrains de Gennevilliers).

¹²¹ The promoters of the Seine-Rhine project also kept their Paris terminal secret. Their plans, submitted in 1826, only covered the canal east from Saint-Maur.

promoters steadfastly refused to reveal the site of the Paris terminal. Thus when in January 1827 they submitted their detailed plans for the canal from Rouen to Paris, they revealed only the route as far as Bezons, to the north-west of Paris.¹²² They claimed that this reserve was necessary to preclude land speculation. Only in July 1829 did the promoters reveal the site of their Paris terminal and only then because the canal commission of the *Ponts-et-Chaussées* was refusing to reach any decision on their project until it had been given the entire plan. They were thus obliged to reveal that, in association with other speculators, they had been secretly buying land on the Gennevilliers plain. Land speculation, then, was an essential part of the maritime canal proposal. Already in March 1827 its promoters, along with Ardoin, the founder of the port Saint-Ouen, and a group of regime notables,¹²³ were planning a land company and the following July they secretly agreed to purchase land up to a maximum outlay of six million francs. In return for revealing detailed plans for the port, the canal promoters were promised that all land needed for port installations would be sold to their company at cost price. Since the group anticipated industries and commerce would be set up around the new port, they expected to reap large profits.¹²⁴ From October 1829 onwards the group sought unsuccessfully to secure authorisation for a joint-stock company to be capitalized at five millions, half of which was to be provided in the form of land already owned by the group.¹²⁵

"Deuxième mémoire sur le projet d'un canal de la Seine au Rhin, présenté le 23 août 1826." A. N. F¹¹ 10139.

¹²² Promoters to Becquey, 23 January 1827. A. N. F¹¹ 7106.

¹²³ This group included Bourmont, royalist and soldier, the deputies Counts de Bouville, de Juigné, and de Bertier, and a soldier, the Viscount de Prével.

¹²⁴ By July another régime notable, de Vitrolles, had joined the group and by 1830 he had invested 400,000 francs in the project. They planned to buy between 3,000 and 4,000 acres (*arpents*). *Documents authentiques pour servir à l'intelligence de cette opération*, Paris n. d. [B. N. fonds Le Senne, 5444 (8)]; confirmed in Baron de Vitrolles to Minister of the Interior, 12 July 1830. A. N. F¹¹ 6823.

¹²⁵ By 1829 the composition of the group had changed slightly and now included

Like the land speculation on the Ivry plain, that on the Gennevilliers proved still-born: the Seine maritime canal was never built. The project failed for four principal reasons. The first was technical. It was never evident to contemporaries — to engineers, to the Chamber of Commerce — that the best means of improving communications between Paris and the ports was the construction of an expensive maritime canal. Difficulties posed by the proposed canal crossing the Seine at different points and by the tidal river between Rouen and Le Havre were never demonstrably solved. The second was that the project, proposed at the peak of the 1820s boom, was overtaken by economic depression. By 1829, indeed, the promoters were limiting their plan to a canal between Rouen and Paris and reducing its depth from five metres to 3.5 and its cost from 160 millions to 64.¹²⁶ The third was the change of regime in 1830: the canal's chief political supporters — the Polignacs, Vitrolles, Bouville, Bourmont — were associated with the Restoration. The final factor was the stridently negative response of the commercial interests outside Paris which were consulted on the project from January 1830 onwards. The seaports, in particular, opposed the canal which they naturally associated with Parisian attempts to secure the bonded warehouse privilege and to have the capital displace the ports as the leading *entrepôt*.¹²⁷

Counts A. and F. de Béthune, de Bouville, A. and C. Chauveau, A. and L. de Juigné, along with Ardoin and the canal promoters. Stéphane Flachet and Ardoin to Minister of the Interior, 23 October 1829; A. Sénac, report to Minister of the Interior, 8 January 1830. A. N. F¹ 6823.

¹²⁶ This new cost estimate did not include the new port and basins at Paris and Rouen. Bayard de la Vingtrie, "Mémoire sur le canal de la Seine de Paris à Rouen," 27 May 1829. A. N. F¹ 7106. The decision to abandon the Rouen-Le Havre portion was also influenced by the success of steam navigation between the two ports. The 3.5 m. depth now proposed for the canal compares with the 2 m. minimum depth that the 1845-6 Seine improvement programme sought- -and failed- -to create.

¹²⁷ Ports protested against the power and privileges the capital already enjoyed (the La Rochelle Chamber, for instance) and against the speculation that the canal represented (the Dunkirk Chamber claimed the canal had become for Parisians "une espèce de monomanie dont rien ne saurait les distraire"). A. N. F¹ 7106.

After 1832 no more is heard of the Seine maritime canal project. Yet despite the doubts that must remain as to the financial backing the plan had or would have secured if the canal had been approved, the 1824-32 project was more carefully planned and came nearer to success than either its predecessors or its numerous successors.

V

The collapse of the Seine ship canal proposal in 1832 coincided with the beginning of a new campaign involving not only the owners of new river ports and canals in the Paris region but the promoters of new residential developments in the city. This was the controversy over the siting of the bonded warehouse which Paris was finally authorised to establish in February.¹²⁸ It is the third aspect of business elite intervention.

As the victory of the Paris Chamber of Commerce in its efforts to secure an *entrepôt* had been gained only after a long and bitter debate, so the question of the site for the new institution was only resolved after a fifteen-month struggle between competing localities. The conflict was played out in pamphlets, memorials and the press but, above all, in projects submitted to the Municipal Council. In March 1832 Bondy, Prefect of the Seine, set up a mixed commission, composed of members of the Council and of the Chamber of Commerce, to report on the most appropriate site for the bonded warehouse.¹²⁹ It is indicative of the importance of the campaign that was generated that by the end of

¹²⁸ Though the records of the Municipal Council have been lost and though the private papers of Bondy, Prefect of the Seine from February 1831 to June 1833, contain nothing of interest for this period (A. N. 177 AP), we are fortunate that the Chamber of Commerce has a full dossier on the *entrepôt* (A. C. C. P. 652-I). Also useful are A. N. F¹² 6395 (Docks et *Entrepôts* de Paris, 1831-1913) and F¹² 2597 (Douanes: *Entrepôt* de Paris, 1831-1840).

¹²⁹ *Journal du Commerce*, 18 March 1832.

May, twenty-two different projects had already been submitted.¹³⁰ The publication of the commission's report in October, indeed, was the occasion for a flurry of protests in the press and in petitions that forced the Municipal Council to ask its commission to make a second report. The first report had recommended that the bonded warehouse be set up inside the city boundaries, so as to avoid the need for double verifications by customs and *octroi* officials, and that to eliminate trans-shipments it should be situated either on the river or the canals. It had also classified possible sites in order of preference and it was this that was called into question. The second report, submitted early the following January, led to renewed protests, proposals and counter-proposals. All it had managed to achieve was to alter the order of preference of the previous October. Whereas the place des Marais, because of its situation on the Saint-Martin canal and the easy access it afforded to the right-bank business districts, had been given priority in October, the left-bank river location of the Ile des Cygnes displaced it the following January.¹³¹ It was in the face of this renewed controversy and despite the opposition of the Prefect of the Seine, the Minister of Finance and civil servants, that the Municipal Council determined that not one but two *entrepôts* could be established.¹³² And two were built, one at the place des Marais and the other at the Ile des Cygnes.

So intense was the conflict over the siting of the *entrepôt* that the wider but crucial problem of the future of the bonded warehouse tended to be overlooked.¹³³ How is this intensity to be

¹³⁰ Minutes of the Chamber of Commerce, 30 May 1832. A. C. C. P.

¹³¹ "Rapport de la Commission de l'entrepôt de douane au Conseil municipal de la Ville de Paris," 10 January 1833. A. C. C. P. 652-I.

¹³² *Journal du Commerce*, 17 January 1833. The idea of setting up two bonded warehouses rather than one was first publicly mooted in an article in the *Journal du Commerce* on 24 January which pointed out that London had no fewer than eight *entrepôts*.

¹³³ As the *Journal du Commerce* frequently complained. As, for example, 11 July and 16 October 1832.

explained? One obvious reason was that in the persisting economic crisis port and residential development promoters tried all the harder to secure some return on assets frozen in unprofitable speculations. Another was that the coalitions of interests involved mobilized not only those directly interested in speculative land investments in and around the capital but mayors and property-owners in different arrondissements, river against canal interests, left bank against right bank.

Participants in the debate, however, could not accurately determine the role that the *entrepôt* would play in the Parisian and even the French economy. The mixed commission, for instance, was forced to work without statistics on existing transit¹³⁴ and without being able to forecast the impact on transit of the changing transport network that linked Paris to Rouen and Le Havre, on the one hand, and to Alsace, on the other. If the plans for both ship canal and Seine-Rhine canal had already been shelved, the impact of still unfinished canals, like the Briare, Burgundy and Rhône-Rhine, remained an imponderable. The same was true of navigation and trends in the size of boats on the lower Seine. On the one hand, the powerful Paris canal companies contended that canal boats — that is boats able to enter their canal network — were capable of carrying all goods traffic on the river, while, on the other, owners of river boats too wide to use the canals protested that to place the bonded warehouse on the canals would spell their ruin.¹³⁵ The new steam railway, whose goods-carrying potential was already being demonstrated on the Liverpool and Manchester line, together with the increasing number of projects for railways from the capital,¹³⁶ added yet

¹³⁴ Only figures for Switzerland were available. "Rapport de la Commission de l'entrepôt..."

¹³⁵ The Commission calculated that 101 out of the 321 boats that carried goods from the mouth of the Seine to Paris were river boats. Cf. the calculations of the *Journal du Commerce*, 27 and 29 September and 10 October 1832. Boats of 400-500 tons could use the canal but they were difficult to manoeuvre and moved slowly.

¹³⁶ By early 1832 three projects for lines to Orléans and a project for a line to

another complication to the debate on the *entrepôt* site. The Municipal Council, which for once was a decision-making body, was itself ill-equipped to make the decisions that were asked of it. Of its twenty-four members only two — Ganneron and Sanson-Davillier — had any direct experience of commerce in colonial goods.¹³⁷ It was thus not surprising that one banker member could complain: «Il est plus facile de faire un emprunt que de faire un entrepôt!»¹³⁸

Although a number of other sites were proposed,¹³⁹ the real conflict was between five sites, two on the left bank and three on the right. The sites on the left bank were Grenelle, which was outside the city limits, and the Ile des Cygnes in the tenth arrondissement. At first these two sites campaigned separately but from October 1832, when it was determined that the *entrepôt* would be inside the city, they collaborated. The Grenelle port had the advantage of being spacious and having extensive land available and the disadvantage of distance from commercial centres, difficult water communication with the upper Seine and a proven inability to compete with other river and canal ports.¹⁴⁰

Pontoise as the first leg of a railway to Rouen were under discussion. A. N. F^o 8862 and 8900.

¹³⁷ *Journal du Commerce*, 24 January 1833.

¹³⁸ *Journal du Commerce*, 18 September 1832.

¹³⁹ The *greniers d'abondance* at the port of the Arsenal were proposed by the mayor of the ninth arrondissement. Crosnier to the Minister of Commerce, 21 January 1832. A. N. F^o 2597 and G. DE CHAMFREY, *Du choix d'un local pour l'Entrepôt de la ville de Paris*, Paris 1832 (pamphlet) B. N. fonds Le Senne 11447 (7). Property-owners in the François Ier quarter wrote to the Minister of Commerce in January 1832 that the *entrepôt* would bring life to their quarter and would rid it of "cet air sombre et monotone." A. N. F^o 6395. La Villette had been suggested as a site by de Moléon as early as 1828, in 1831 by an architect, and was again proposed in March 1835 in a brochure that the La Villette municipal council had printed. J.-G.-V. DE MOLÉON, *Mémoire sur le quartier neuf de La Villette...*, Paris 1828, pp. 33-8; *l'Entrepôt sur les bords de la grande route d'Allemagne et du bassin de La Villette*, 29 March 1832 (copy in A. N. F^o 2597). Cordier proposed the Ivry plain in a pamphlet entitled *Considérations sur le entrepôts intérieurs et sur le projet d'entrepôt sur la plaine d'Ivry*, Paris 1832.

¹⁴⁰ It cost 1 franc per ton to go from La Briche, on the Seine at the entrance to the

Given the unprofitability of the enterprise, indeed, not only the directors of the company but a group of shareholders in Lyon each began campaigns to secure the *entrepôt* even before parliament had finally voted its authorization.¹⁴¹ Already in August 1831 the directors had reported to shareholders that the only way to make their company profitable was to have the bonded warehouse at Grenelle.¹⁴² Early the following year, then, they launched an expensive pamphlet campaign¹⁴³ and at an extraordinary shareholders' meeting in April it was agreed that 300 company shares (at a nominal value of 1,000 francs each) would be offered to the entrepreneur who would undertake either to build the *entrepôt* at Grenelle or, if the site had to be inside city limits, to use its port.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, Lyonnais shareholders — who owned over 2,000 shares¹⁴⁵ — inserted articles in the local press, secured letters of support from the mayor of Lyon and the Prefect of the Rhône and petitioned Paris.¹⁴⁶

The so-called Ile des Cygnes, no longer an island because it had been fully integrated into the left bank between 1773 and 1812,¹⁴⁷ shared with Grenelle the advantage of being on the river

Saint-Denis canal, to Grenelle but only 50 centimes to take the canal to the place des Marais.

¹⁴¹ Violet supported the efforts of Rivaud to secure the *entrepôt* for Grenelle between June 1829 and September 1830. A. N. F¹² 2597.

¹⁴² Shareholders' meeting of 11 August 1831. A. N. F¹² 6792.

¹⁴³ In the first six months of 1832, 23% of the company's operating costs was for printing pamphlets and petitions. Shareholders' meeting of 26 July 1832. A. N. F¹² 6792. Copies of petitions in A. N. C 2758.

¹⁴⁴ A.N.F¹² 6792.

¹⁴⁵ Lyonnais shareholders to the Minister of Public Works, 12 January 1832. A. C. C. P. 652-I.

¹⁴⁶ *Gazette Lyonnais*, 31 January; *Précurseur de Lyon*, 28 January, and *Courrier de Lyon*, 13 February 1832; *Requête des actionnaires lyonnais...* (pamphlet) January 1832. A. N. F¹² 6395; Prefect of the Rhône to the Minister of Commerce, 6 February 1832. A. N. F¹² 2596.

¹⁴⁷ This not to be confused with the present-day Ile des Cygnes which is not an island but a breakwater. For the development of this area, see OLIVIER ZUNZ, "Etude d'un processus d'urbanisation: le quartier du Gros-Caillou à Paris", *Annales E. S. C.*, XXV, 1970, pp. 1024-65.

and of still being in an undeveloped area of the city. It was promoted by a committee of property-owners in the Gros-Caillou quarter which gained the support of Baron Desgenettes, mayor, and Dupin, deputy of the tenth arrondissement. Its campaign is of note for two reasons. First, it stressed that the right banks, whose population had increased by nearly 50,000 since 1817, had been given an unfair advantage by the canals and public works of the Restoration and that the left bank, whose population had declined slightly, needed new initiatives to redress the balance.¹⁴⁸ Second, the committee launched a subscription in their quarter to raise 300,000 francs to be offered as a premium to the capitalist who would set up a bonded warehouse at the Ile des Cygnes. By the beginning of 1833 not only had over half this amount been raised¹⁴⁹ but an agreement had been reached with the Grenelle company that an *entrepôt* at Gros-Caillou would use its port and that a railway to link port and warehouse would be built along the quays.

No less inventive and rather more costly were the combinations proposed by property-owners in the new right-bank developments of Tivoli and Saint-Lazare. The financial sacrifices they promised to make, indeed, reflect their desperation to bring business to their unsuccessful speculations. Both quarters enjoyed the advantages of being situated at the northern and north-western periphery of the city and having ample land available. The disadvantage both suffered was that they did not have direct access either to the river or to the canal. It was to overcome this drawback that property-owners in each quarter proposed to establish these links at their own expense. Thus a group in Tivoli early came to an agreement with Ardoin whereby

¹⁴⁸ Desgenettes and others to the Prefect of the Seine, 28 February 1832 and "Réponse des habitans du X^e arrondissement...", July 1832. A. N. F^o 2597; petition to the Prefect of the Seine, 16 November 1832. A. C. C. P. 652-I.

¹⁴⁹ *Observations au sujet de l'emplacement de l'Entrepôt...*, (pamphlet), n. d., (copy in A. C. C. P. 652-I).

they were to take over the port Saint-Ouen — accessible both to canal and river boats — and to build a railway to carry goods from the port to the proposed Tivoli *entrepôt*. As competition with other sites intensified, their offers became even more generous. By November 1832 the property-owners in Tivoli were proposing to give land to the bonded warehouse backers, while the backers themselves were planning a railway. This project, which had been drawn up by the engineer Polonceau, was to consist of a line to Saint-Denis as well as to port Saint-Ouen which had the additional purpose of being the likely rail-head of an eventual line to Rouen. By March 1833 their proposal for an *entrepôt*, a railway to Saint-Denis and port Saint-Ouen and docks at Saint-Denis was to cost nearly seven million francs.¹⁵⁰ The rival Saint-Lazare campaign was led by the founders of the new quarter themselves. They early secured the backing of the mayor of the third arrondissement and they, too, launched a subscription among property-owners.¹⁵¹ It was proposed to build not only a railway to port Saint-Ouen but a canal to La Villette. The cost of both these and the *entrepôt* in Saint-Lazare was estimated at 2.5 millions.¹⁵² And in a last effort to gain

¹⁵⁰ The promoters of the Tivoli *entrepôt* were Fessart and de Bouville, both of whom had been involved in the Seine ship canal project and the Gennevilliers speculation, and Ratel. Their proposals are to be found in *Soumission pour construire l'Entrepôt de Paris, à titre d'entreprise particulière, sur les terrains de Tivoli*, (pamphlet), 19 December 1832. B. N. fonds Le Senne 11447 (2); *Entrepôt à Tivoli. Observations à la suite de la soumission pour l'Entrepôt sur les terrains de Tivoli* (pamphlet), 1 January 1833 and *Entrepôt de Paris. Observations sur le mode de délibération suivi par le Conseil municipal et conclusions pour la Compagnie de l'entrepôt à Tivoli avec port à Saint-Ouen* (pamphlet), 24 January 1833. A.C.C.P. 652-I; A.R. POLONCEAU, *Description du chemin de fer de l'entrepôt de Tivoli au Port Saint-Ouen et à Saint-Denis* (pamphlet), 16 February 1833. B.N. fonds Le Senne 11447 (12).

¹⁵¹ Printed letter signed Poignant, notary of the Compagnie du nouveau quartier Poissonnière, 14 January 1833 and countersigned by J.-J. Rousseau, mayor of the third arrondissement. A. C. C. P. 652-I.

¹⁵² The cost of the projected railway was raised by the nature of the terrain that imposed the necessity of a tunnel. See Dominique Lenoir (one of the speculators in the new quarter), *Entrepôt dans le terrain de la Ville au clos Saint-Lazare* (pamphlet), 1832 and D. L. RODET, *D'une délibération du Conseil municipal de Paris. Observations*

the *entrepôt* site they offered to subsidize the canal and railway out of profits from the sale of their land.¹⁵³

None of the combinations mounted by Tivoli and Saint-Lazare was of any avail against the advantages and alliance enjoyed by the third right-bank site, the place des Marais. Not only was this the most conveniently situated of all sites but its promoters came to an agreement with the Paris canal companies which promised to cede the city land the Saint-Martin company owned at the place des Marais, to increase the size of the basin there and to reduce dues for traffic to the *entrepôt*.¹⁵⁴

When in January the Municipal Council decided in favour of two *entrepôts* and invited tenders, it did so amidst the smoke and confusion of the escalating conflict between proponents of these five prospective sites. It decided on two rather than one for reasons not dissimilar to those invoked by the same body in 1844 when it voted in favour of multiple railway termini in Paris. It refused to confer what might have been a monopoly position on the right-bank canals and to thereby put an end to competition between canal and river boats, between canal and river ports in the Paris area. Companies from the place des Marais and the Ile des Cygnes successfully tendered for these two *entrepôts* and both were opened in 1834.

Important elements in the business elite, then, had set great store by the role a bonded warehouse might play not just in Parisian and French trade but as a source of prosperity for previous speculations in port and residential developments. They were to be disappointed on both counts. Neither of the *entrepôts* was ever a commercial success. The one on the left bank did not

faisant suite aux études sur l'entrepôt de douane (pamphlet), February 1833; correspondance and petitions from André and Cottier, February-March 1833. A. N. F¹⁷ 6395.

¹⁵³ Mémoire submitted 29 March 1833. A. N. F¹⁷ 6395.

¹⁵⁴ Canal company to Lafaulotte, 2 December 1832. A. C. C. P. 652-I; *De l'entrepôt sur la place des Marais* (pamphlet); n. d. B. H. V. P.

bring prosperity to the port of Grenelle or to the Ile des Cygness and was closed in 1838.¹⁵⁵ The place des Marais company survived but only once — in 1844 — was its *entrepôt* used to full capacity — and its average annual dividend between 1834 and 1852 was only two percent.¹⁵⁶ Paris thus never carved out more than a tiny portion of bonded warehouse trade¹⁵⁷ and the transit, of which so much had been expected, failed to develop.¹⁵⁸

VI

The study of the business elite's intervention in urban space in the two decades after 1814 is thus a study in failure. What, then, is the significance of this speculation in canal, port and bonded warehouse development and how can it be tied in with the wider question of economic change in the capital? To find answers I suggest two time perspectives — the conjuncture and the longer term — have to be adopted.

As for the first, my analysis demonstrates, firstly and most obviously, that the business elite's intervention in urban space under the Restoration was not restricted, as have we to believe,¹⁵⁹ to the planned development of new residential quarters but included attempts to create new ports, warehouse facilities

¹⁵⁵ The Paris Chamber of Commerce, which was responsible for the *entrepôts*, has rich dossiers on the later history of the bonded warehouse problem.

¹⁵⁶ Louis Jonnart et Cie. To the Paris Chamber of Commerce. A. C. C. P. 652-I.

¹⁵⁷ An annual average of 5.6% by value of French bonded warehouse trade between 1837 and 1846 and 5% between 1847 and 1856. *Tableau décennal du commerce de la France avec ses colonies...*, Paris 1848, p. XXX and Paris 1859, part I, p. XLIII.

¹⁵⁸ Once regulations had been liberalised early in 1832, transit increased by 124% by value and 141% by weight down to 1836 but the momentum was not maintained. Between 1837 and 1846 increases were 31% by value and 53% by weight. *Tableau décennal...*, Paris 1848, pp. XXXI and LVIII.

¹⁵⁹ Thus LOUIS BERGERON and MARCEL RONCAYOLO ("De la ville préindustrielle à la ville industrielle...") see the 1820s building boom as being the same residential speculation as was found in the eighteenth-century and as reflecting only the renewal of elites in the capital.

and even canals. It shows, secondly, the willingness of the Parisian business elite to bear risk. At least some of its members were influenced by, and even participated in, grand schemes that promised no less than a revolution in Paris's commercial functions. The strategies they adopted were determined not only by the opportunities offered but by the speculative urge to anticipate and create them. The blossoming of canal, port and bonded warehouse projects at this time may even suggest that some contemporaries were more aware than many historians have been of the changes that were taking place in the Parisian economy. Thirdly, the short-term failure of these projects suggests that the calculations of their promoters were thwarted not just by the vagaries of the boom-slump sequence in the economy, by the depression after 1826, but also by uncertainties as to future patterns of re-exports and the transit trade, and as to possible innovations in means of transport. Lastly, the conflict of interests, the clash between river and canal, left and right banks, the arguments that were invoked as to Paris's role and its spatial development, prove that awareness of the shifting centre of gravity in the capital does not date, as has been claimed, from the late 1830s and the setting up of a special commission of the Municipal Council¹⁶⁰ but was already a part of the discourse of spokesmen for different arrondissements.

The short term may be, as an influential historian has often warned, the most capricious and deceptive of realities.¹⁶¹ Viewed from a longer perspective, however, the grand designs, the secret speculations, the conflict of interests and quarters we have examined become more than a passing enthusiasm generated by a spectacular boom or the momentary desperation of capitalists in

¹⁶⁰ PIERRE LAVEDAN, *Histoire de l'urbanisme à Paris*, Paris 1975, p. 398. The same author's *La question du déplacement de Paris*, Paris 1969, attributes too much importance to Lanquetin and not enough to earlier discussions such as Rabusson's which dates from 1836 (*Travaux d'utilité publique. Travaux d'Arcis*, Paris 1836).

¹⁶¹ FERNAND BRAUDEL, *Écrits sur l'histoire*, Paris, 1967, p. 46.

the depression that followed. Why? For one thing, though it could only have been cold comfort for the speculators, the repatterning of the economic geography of the capital and the expansion of the city vindicated the projects of the Restoration. Prosperity came to both Tivoli and Saint-Lazare with the opening of the railway termini and the continuing westward migration of bourgeois and business quarters. Tivoli developed slowly after the opening there of the Paris station of the Saint-Germain railway but prosperity was assured from the 1850s onwards.¹⁶² The Saint-Lazare quarter owed its success, at least in part, to the opening of the terminus of the Northern railway in 1846.¹⁶³ Of the sites for river ports, both the Gennevilliers¹⁶⁴ and the Ivry plains were later to acquire the major dock facilities that had already been proposed in the 1820s, while the port Saint-Ouen was to be successfully integrated into the transport network of the Northern railway.

For another thing, the dreams and conflicts we have studied were less aberrations than harbingers of recurring projects for ports and canals and of on-going debates on the spatial development of the city. Not even the uncertainties of the earlier period diminished because the advent of the steam railway and river improvements were to add new complexity to transport to and within the Paris region. The Marne-Rhine canal was actually approved in 1838 and completed in 1853. In the 1850s, moreover, there were new projects to make Paris a major redistribution centre for colonial goods, new projects for a central *entrepôt* at

¹⁶² E. MAREUSE, "Essai sur la formation du quartier de l'Europe", *Bulletin de la Société historique et archéologique des VIII^e et XVII^e arrondissements de Paris*, 1915-6, pp. 145-64.

¹⁶³ For the development of the Saint-Lazare quarter, see RENÉ CLOZIER, *La gare du Nord*, Paris 1940.

¹⁶⁴ A number of later plans for ship canals to Paris also adopted the Gennevilliers plain as their point of arrival: Sabattié's plan of 1863; the first plan put forward by Bouquet de la Grye in 1883; the Labadie plan of 1886. Today, of course, it is the Port de Paris.

Tivoli¹⁶⁵ as well as the grandiose — and fraudulent — *Docks Napoléon* scheme¹⁶⁶ that attracted 25 million francs of investors' funds.¹⁶⁷ From the 1850s onwards, indeed, there was a succession of new proposals to make Paris a seaport by means of a canal either to Dieppe or, more usually, to Le Havre.¹⁶⁸ Important elements remained constant in the ship canal project of the 1820s and plans put forward later in the century. One was the desire to seize the transit trade for the Le Havre-Paris-Strasbourg axis.¹⁶⁹ Thus the numerous proposals of the 1880s and 1890s were prompted partly by the building of ship canals elsewhere in Europe but, above all, by the rapid growth of the Antwerp and the decline of Le Havre *entrepôts*.¹⁷⁰ Others were the opposition of Le Havre and Rouen and fears in the capital that a planned new port facility to the north-west of the capital would accentuate trends in Paris's spatial development.¹⁷¹

The conflict of quarters, of left and right banks, the fears in the Municipal Council over the capital's shifting centre of gravity, were critical factors in later decisions that affected Parisian development. Thus the clash of left and right banks were partly, if not mainly, responsible for the decision in 1837 to

¹⁶⁵ The plan of 1848-50 was to have cost 20 million francs. A. N. F¹⁷ 6396 and Report to the Chamber of Commerce made by the commission on the Tivoli project, 25 October 1848. A. C. C. P. 652-I.

¹⁶⁶ JEANNE GAILLARD, *Paris, la ville 1852-1870...*, pp. 485-524.

¹⁶⁷ *Rapport de MM. Picard et Labot, administrateurs-liquidateurs de la Société des Docks-Napoléon*, Paris 1860 (pamphlet).

¹⁶⁸ The projects for ship canals to Paris put forward between 1852 and 1912 are discussed in HENRI PICARD, *Paris-port de mer, étude et critique des différents projets de canal maritime aboutissant à Paris*, Paris 1913.

¹⁶⁹ The transit issue was a significant element in the 1838 government proposal to build the Marne-Rhine canal which was completed in 1853 and was again raised by the engineer Collignon when work on the canal had been temporarily halted in 1845. See speeches in the Chamber of Deputies, 31 May 1838, *Archives parlementaires*, CXX, Paris 1910, pp. 615-6; CHARLES COLLIGNON, *Du concours des canaux et des chemins de fer et de l'achèvement du canal de la Marne au Rhin*, Paris 1845, pp. 154-209 and "De l'achèvement du canal de la Marne au Rhin", n. d. [1845], A. N. F¹⁷ 6957.

¹⁷⁰ BOUQUET DE LA GRYE, *Paris-port de mer*, Paris n. d. [1892], pp. 204-38.

¹⁷¹ As is clear in the inquiries on the Bouquet de la Grye project. A. P. 2 S¹ 1.

authorize the building of two railway lines to Versailles, with departure points on opposite banks, rather than the one that traffic justified.¹⁷² The 1841-2 proposal to establish a second basin on the Saint-Denis canal was opposed by the Municipal Council which feared such a basin would further stimulate the development of the area to the north-west of the capital.¹⁷³ For similar reasons, the same body in 1844 voted in favour of a multiplicity of railway termini rather than the one for each bank that was being proposed.

Most historians have long shown a predilection for studying success, though few have gone along with Trotsky to claim that failures should be banished to "the rubbish-bin of history." It has been argued here that the study of the largely unsuccessful speculation in ports and *entrepôts* and of the related and wholly unsuccessful attempts to build a maritime ship canal between Paris and Rouen and Le Havre and to make the capital a major redistribution centre for the re-export trade is valuable for what it reveals about the business elite's intervention in urban space and about the Parisian economy. It lifts at least a corner of the veil that hides the vital changes taking place in the neglected era when the capital was a pedestrian city and traffic flows predominantly water-borne.

¹⁷² BARRIE M. RATCLIFFE, "Railway Imperialism: the Example of the Pereires' Paris-Saint-Germain Company, 1835-1846", *Business History*, XVIII, 1976, pp. 66-84.

¹⁷³ Davillier's report to the Municipal Council, n. d. [1842]. A. N. F¹ 6729 (Traversée de Paris; améliorations et perfectionnements, an VII-1860).