

being a port or place in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, or the United States of America, unless the master and first or only mate possess either certificates of competency or service for sea-going ships appropriate to their several stations in such ship, granted either by the Board of Trade in the United Kingdom, or the Minister of Marine and Fisheries of Canada, or by the authorities of any British possessions whose certificates have been recognized by the British Government.

As there are many elderly, respectable shipmasters in Canada, who do not feel themselves able to pass the examination for competency, or who do not wish to do so, it was provided in the Act referred to, that certificates of service might be granted to meet such cases, to shipmasters and mates who had served as such previous to the 1st January, 1870, without undergoing any examination as to their competency, but merely on their producing satisfactory evidence of their sobriety, experience, ability, and general good conduct on board ship. The fee charged for these certificates is \$5 for a master, and \$3 for a mate.

A specimen form of a master's certificate of competency, as also of service, are given in the appendix. Certificates for mates are similar, the word mate being substituted for master.

A number of communications have reached me from time to time, urging on my notice the necessity of providing for examinations of masters of inland vessels, and granting them certificates on something like the plan adopted for sea-going ships, though of course the examination would be of a different kind, but I am not aware that the time has yet arrived, when the shipowners and traders of the lakes and inland waters really desire such a measure, and until I can ascertain that such is the case, it would not be advisable to recommend action in the matter. The time will come shortly however, when shipowners, traders, and underwriters, will desire that such a measure should be placed on the Statute-book, in order to provide greater security to life and property.

#### ENQUIRY INTO WRECKS AND REWARDS FOR SAVING LIFE.

The weather on the sea coasts of North America during the latter part of the last calendar year has been unusually boisterous and stormy, causing much damage and loss to Canadian shipping. A number of vessels have been lost at sea, owing to stress of weather, while there have been numerous shipwrecks on our sea coasts during last year, in some cases attended with considerable loss of life. Many of our Canadian vessels have also been much damaged at sea, causing them to put into foreign ports for repairs, which under any circumstances, is generally a serious loss, both to owners and underwriters. In the River St. Lawrence, the weather suddenly changed at the end of November last, a cold fierce north-west wind having set in, which rendered the atmosphere so exceedingly cold, that ice immediately formed, and many parts of the river between Montreal and the lower Saint Lawrence became frozen over, and effectually prevented the ships which were proceeding to sea from reaching open water, and a number of them became total wrecks, as no assistance could reach them to bring them out of the ice. Many of the Government buoys which mark the channel, were also frozen