

SHIPPING MATTERS.

The Upper St. Lawrence Channel.

A good deal of matter has appeared in the press recently in reference to the depth of water in the Upper St. Lawrence channel, some captains and pilots being reported as saying it is all right for vessels drawing 14 ft., others contending to the contrary, Capt. T. Donnelly, of Kingston, Chief Inspector of the Canadian Lake Underwriters' Association, being quoted as doubting the existence of a clear 14 ft. channel. We recently sent a collection of clippings on the subject to Capt. Donnelly, with the request that he would favor us with his views, and have received the following reply:—

"I do not wish to enter into a controversy at long range with our Canadian pilots, and I have no wish to be considered as finding fault with our St. Lawrence river waterway, the finest stream of fresh water on the face of the globe, and one that only needs a little more attention from the Government to make it a safe and navigable stream for vessels drawing 14 ft. of water. My views have been published at some length, and none of the pilots quoted in the request that you send me, have ever disputed any statement that I have made with reference to the draught of water available. On talking to the pilots about the matter, I find that they are not always correctly reported in the press, and as I know every one of them intimately, I do not wish to find fault with any statement credited to them by the every-day newspaper reporter. The pilots have no responsibility in the matter whatever, from a financial point of view, and you can easily understand that as all these steamers and their cargoes are insured, the underwriters are not going to allow vessels (on which insurance is carried) to load to 14 ft., unless we are certain that there is a navigable channel of 14 ft. draught. Governments in the past have done a great deal for the St. Lawrence channel, and the present Government is very anxious to improve it to the best of its ability. I am not one that wants to find fault with their work, but there are so much politics to the square inch in Canada, that just as soon as one points out matters of this kind that need attention by the Government, it is at once considered that you are taking sides against the powers that be, and immediately a newspaper controversy begins, and yet you cannot gain any satisfaction by writing the Departments, for the reason that some of the officers in charge of government work imagine that they are working for themselves instead of for the public. However, I think the Government at Ottawa now understands the situation, and I have every confidence that it will do the best it can to remove the difficulties now existing in the channel as early as possible after the opening of navigation.

"My idea of a 14 ft. channel is one that is navigable all through the season of navigation, and does not depend on the direction of the wind. It may be, as some of the pilots have stated, that there will be 14 ft. on the opening of navigation this year, but none of us can tell how long that will last, it depends upon the height of water above normal level. If men start steamship lines from the head of the lakes to salt water, they have to depend on the vessels being able to keep up some sort of a regular service. Last fall boats were detained at Prescott eight days with an east wind, although the vessels were only drawing 12 ft. The portion of the river, just above Cardinal, and in the Rapid De Plat, at present holds the key of the situation, and from the middle of the season last year, it was not safe to use this portion of the river with vessels drawing over 12 ft., and then only when the wind was not from the north or east. My information is obtained from careful sweeping tests made in the river by government offi-

cials, and I have no other object in view than to assist in removing the obstructions by calling the Government's attention to them. It is really too bad that one has to obtain so much notoriety in doing it. There has been no change made in deepening the river since the last test was made in November, 1900.

"In former years, when the small class of vessels drawing 9 ft. of water, built either of wood or with wooden sheathing on the bottom, touched one of these obstructions in the river, they glanced off it, generally doing little, if any, damage. If one of our modern steel steamers touches a lump of rock, it is hard to shove 3,000 tons to one side, and consequently the underwriters are called on to pay for very large repairs to the steel plating and framing of the vessels.

"Why we are anxious to have a safe, navigable channel is very clear. This trade from the lakes in modern steamers is just commencing, and one or two bad groundings will work irreparable damage to the Montreal trade in so far as the upper lakes are concerned. I can point out to you exactly where the bad spots are, but as I have freely stated their position in former letters to the press, I have no wish to take up any more of your space, except to say that there is not a safe 14 ft. channel throughout the season between Montreal and Kingston, although I believe that the Government will make it a safe channel in the very near future, now that the matter has been called to its attention.

"Of course, you know there are 'pilots' and 'pilots,' some of them know all about taking down light draught vessels, but there are very few that know how to safely take care of a modern steel steamer drawing 14 ft. between Kingston and Montreal at any time of the season, and it is hard for any of them, from lack of experience, to realize what it means to have 3,000 tons going down the river 12 miles an hour under their control."

Government Steamer for Quebec.

Tenders will be received by the Department of Marine up to June 1 for the construction of a twin-screw steel steamer for lighthouse and buoy service in the Quebec district. The vessel is to be delivered within nine months after the contract has been entered into. Her principal dimensions will be, length of keel 160 ft., moulded breadth 30 ft., moulded depth 13 ft. midships, round of deck beam 10 inches. The vessel is to be built under Lloyd's special survey, and to be classed 100 A1 at Lloyd's. She is to have cellular double bottom fore and aft, except in ballast tanks and wells under boilers, and to be fitted with bilge keels. There are to be four water-tight bulkheads besides collision and stern-tube bulkheads. As the vessel is to be built for the purpose of crushing her way through heavy ice the scantlings of the keel, stern, stern frame etc., are to be given extra strength, the stern, stern-frame and rudder-post to be at least 25% over Lloyd's requirements. The forward hold is to be fitted for cargo, gas tanks and compressor, to have a deadweight capacity of 40 tons, and the coal bunkers are to contain 60 tons on a maximum draft of 9 ft. 6 ins. There is to be a well deck forward, and a shade deck aft; in the deckhouse will be the officers' quarters, saloon, etc., with a special stateroom, etc.; while the crew will be berthed under the top-gallant fo'castle deck. Over the deckhouse will be the bridge and pilot-house, in which will be the wheelhouse, chart-room and captain's cabin. Two steel pole masts will be provided, the main mast being fitted for towing, and there will be two steam winches, two cargo derricks, and a steam windlass for handling buoys. The vessel is to be electrically lighted throughout and two searchlights of 5,000 candle-power are to be fixed on the bridge.

The vessel is to have a speed of 13 knots an hour on natural draft when fully laden. She will be driven by two sets of direct-acting surface condensing tri-compound engines with inverted cylinders, to which steam will be supplied by three single-ended cylindrical return tubular boilers. The latest improved systems of steam and hand steering appliances will be fitted, and the best tell-tale engine-room telegraph will be fixed in addition to speaking tube communication. Three boats are to be provided in addition to the captain's gig.

The Shipping Casualties Act.

This Act, which has been passed at the present session of the Dominion Parliament, for the purpose of settling the law regarding inquiries and investigations into shipping casualties, was drawn up after consultation between the Canadian Marine Department and the British Board of Trade, and assimilates the Canadian law to that of Great Britain. In the event of a casualty occurring in Canadian waters or near to the Canadian coast to any Canadian or British registered vessel, the principal officer of Customs, or other officer specially delegated, shall make an investigation and report to the Minister of Marine. Upon such report the Minister, if he deem a formal investigation is necessary, can appoint an officer of the Government, a County Court Judge, a Judge of the Superior Court of Quebec, or a Stipendiary Magistrate to be a commissioner for the holding of a court of inquiry; and such legal officer shall be assisted and advised on nautical points by one or more nautical or engineering officers, who shall be appointed for three years. The court cannot hold an investigation into any case already dealt with or into any case under investigation in the United Kingdom. The findings of the court shall be reported to the Minister, and if the certificate of any officer implicated shall have been issued by the British Board of Trade, or by any of the British possessions other than Canada, such certificate, together with a full report of the evidence and the findings of the court shall be forwarded to England or the Governor of such British possession. The Minister of Marine has power to order a rehearing of a case under certain conditions. Sections 4 to 14 inclusive of the Wrecks and Salvage Act, chap. 81 of the Revised Statutes, and chap. 23 of the Statutes of 1893 are repealed.

The Inland Waters Seamen's Act.

In this Act, Revised Statutes of Canada, chap. 75, sec. 2, subsection 7, reads: "The expression 'ship subject to the provisions of this Act' includes every ship registered in Canada, propelled by steam and of more than 20 tons registered tonnage, or propelled otherwise than by steam and of more than 50 tons registered tonnage, and employed in navigating the inland waters of Canada above the harbor of Quebec."

The Act passed at the present session of Parliament amends the above subsection by striking out the words "above the harbor of Quebec," and by adding the following paragraph:—

"(g). The expression 'inland waters of Canada' includes all the rivers, lakes and other navigable waters within Canada, except salt water bays, arms of the sea, and gulfs on the sea coast, and includes the River St. Lawrence as far seaward as a line drawn from Cape Chatte on the south shore to Point des Monts on the north shore."

The following section is also added to the Act:—

"44. In the Northwest Territories, a judge of the Supreme Court, and in the Yukon Territory, a judge of the Territorial Court, shall