

wharf at Picton, Prince Edward County; total loss; fire supposed to have been accidental.

On the 26th April the passenger steamer *Lotbinière*, when fitting up in her winter quarters, at Lotbinière, Quebec, took fire from heating pitch in the kitchen, and was burned.

On the 22nd July the steam whistle of the market boat *Tiger* in going down to St. Famille on the lower St. Lawrence blew out and frightened a woman, who, it is supposed, jumped overboard and was drowned.

A few other unimportant steamboat accidents took place during last year, which were not attended with loss of life.

I avail myself of this opportunity of stating that there is no branch of the Public Service with the administration of which this Department is charged, which is a subject of more anxiety to me, than the Inspection of Steamboats in the Dominion, numbering as they do 438 vessels, scattered all along an immense extent of territory, and carrying during the season of navigation great numbers of passengers, foreign as well as Canadian, on our seacoasts, our rivers and lakes, and it is a matter of great satisfaction for me to know that with such an immense passenger traffic as is carried on the St. Lawrence and the other extensive waters of Canada, no accident occurred during last year involving loss of life to any of the large crowds of passengers who travelled on our Canadian boats, through any defect in the steamers, their boilers or machinery, and I think it bears high testimony not only to the efficiency and safety of our Canadian steamers, but also to the carefulness, patience and vigour of our steamboat inspectors, who I believe have well and faithfully performed their very onerous and responsible duties, and so far as I can learn, to the general satisfaction of the owners of the boats. The reputation of our passenger steamers on the lakes and rivers of Canada, for speed, comfort and safety stands high both at home and abroad, and it has been the means of drawing large numbers of our neighbours from the adjoining states to our waters for the purpose of enjoying the splendid scenery and cool invigorating breezes which are to be found on our lakes and rivers during the summer months.

In British Columbia there are several steamers running, including one owned by the Government engaged in the transport of mails and passengers, but there is no Colonial law in existence there providing for their inspection, although it is probable a measure will be introduced into Parliament at its next session extending the operation of the Canadian Steamboat Inspection Laws to that Province as well as to Manitoba, and thus render the laws relating to this service uniform throughout the Dominion.

In the appendix will be found a list of the steamers lost, broken up or laid aside as unfit for service during last year numbering 29; also a list of new steamers which have been added to our fleet of steamers, during the year ended 31st December, 1871. The number added during that period was 58, of which 49 were built of wood and 6 of iron, and 3 not reported. The average value of these steamers might be stated at the sum of \$20,000 each, including the boilers and engines, thus giving an aggregate value of \$1,160,000 for the steamers added to the Dominion Shipping during last calendar year.