

Hudson Bay Navigation and the Port of Quebec.

J. G. Scott, ex-General Manager, Quebec and Lake St. John Ry., has written to the Quebec Chronicle, defining his attitude on the matter of the navigation of Hudson Bay, on the completion of the Dominion Government's railway from Pas, Man., to Port Nelson, and of the harbor at the latter place. He says:

"At the Board of Trade's general meeting yesterday, Mr. Nesbitt drew attention to the fact that the railway to Port Nelson is to be finished next year, that the terminals at Port Nelson are to be pushed to completion, and that it is said to be the intention of the Government to put on a line of steamships, specially built to contend with the ice, so as to carry the western grain through Hudson Straits to Europe, and that, therefore, we, in Quebec, should insist upon our port being properly equipped with docks and elevators, so as to be ready to handle our share of the business coming over the National Transcontinental Ry. As your reporter does not seem to have fully understood what I said in reply, will you allow me to repeat, namely, that I thought that as the Government had built the railway in response to the pressure of public opinion in the west, it is only reasonable that they should give the project every opportunity to prove its usefulness or otherwise. I pointed out that it would seem to be in the interests of Quebec that the Government should build those ice breaking steamships because, even if the experience of navigating Hudson Straits for two or three months in the year should be successful, the steamships would then be available all the rest of the year for the St. Lawrence route, because any steamships able to cope with the ice in Hudson Straits in September and October would have no trouble in coming up the St. Lawrence to Quebec, all through the winter.

"The great difficulty that Canadian ports have to contend with is the high rate of marine insurance. It is true that the rate from Quebec, Halifax and St. John is 10% cheaper than from Montreal. Nevertheless, it is still so high that steamships charge much higher rates for freight from Canadian than from United States ports. The consequence is that half the grain from our western provinces went by the U. S. route last year, and more than half is going this year. The improvements of the lower St. Lawrence are helping to reduce the insurance rates. The new deep channel, now nearly completed, east of the Island of Orleans, will help still further. If the Government will guarantee the marine underwriters in making our St. Lawrence rates the same as New York all the year round, and will show their confidence in the route by putting on the steamships now spoken of, the battle will be won, and Canadian ports will handle all the Canadian grain that is intended for export instead of seeing the humiliating spectacle of 63,000,000 bush. of it diverted to Buffalo, as was done last year. But, as Mr. Nesbitt says, we must have docks and elevators to handle the traffic, or we won't get it."

German Vessel Tonnage.—At the annual meeting of one of the British steamship companies recently, it was announced that of the 5,459,296 tons of German shipping existing at the commencement of the war, 230,000 tons have been captured by the British Navy; 38,000 tons by other allies; 117,000 tons have been sunk, and 397,000 tons interned in various British ports. The remainder, with the exception of a few small traders in the Baltic Sea, are detained in German harbors, or interned in neutral ports.

Dominion Government s.s. Minto for Icebreaking Service in Russia.

The Dominion Government s.s. Minto has followed the s.s. Earl Grey, in service in the White Sea in keeping the port of Archangel open for navigation throughout the winter. The Minto was specially designed for ice service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland, and was built at Dundee, Scotland, in 1899. She is of steel and classed 100 A1 at Lloyd's. Her dimensions are, length between perpendiculars 225 ft., breadth moulded 32.7 ft., depth moulded 21 ft.; tonnage 1,090 gross, 496 register. For her special ice service she was constructed with extra heavy scantlings for the keel, stern, stern frame, keelson and stringer plates, these being about 50% heavier than required by Lloyd's, and similar strengthening was provided at other points where experience had shown that it was required. There is a cellular double bottom from the forward bulkhead in the fore hold under the boilers and engines to the after bulkhead of the engine room, all made 6 ins. deeper than customary for better cleaning room. The hull is divided into compartments by seven watertight bulkheads, and the shaft tunnel is fitted with a watertight sliding door. Accommodation is provided for seamen and firemen in 20 berths under the forecabin deck, and the officers' quarters are arranged in the deckhouse, as is also the passenger accommodation.

The propelling machinery consists of direct acting surface condensing tri-compound engines with 3 inverted cylinders, 216 n.h.p. and 2,900 i.h.p., supplied with steam by 2 double ended cylindrical return tubular boilers at 160 lbs. Other machinery equipment includes steam and hand steering gear, donkey engines and complete electric lighting system for 150 lights and large searchlight.

The official report concerning the operation of the Minto for the fiscal year 1914-15, states that she made 60½ round trips, carried 14,526,314 lbs. of freight, 476,410 lbs. of express matter, 3,186 passengers, and provided 2,963 meals and 1,118 berths to passengers; with total earnings of \$18,049.33. During the summer of 1914 she was sent to Hudson Bay ports for the Government, and in the winter of 1914-15 she was run between Pictou, N.S., and Georgetown, P.E.I.

Judgment re Insurance, Empress of Britain-Helvetia Collision.

Judgment was given recently in the Court of Appeal, London, Eng., on a matter affecting insurance in connection with the collision between the C.P.R. s.s. Empress of Britain and the British Chilean Steamship Co.'s s.s. Helvetia, under charter to the Dominion Coal Co., in the St. Lawrence River in 1912. The appeal was on behalf of the Helvetia's owner against judgment in a case where the Thames and Mersey Insurance Co. claimed to have been subrogated by the owners, in respect of the sum recovered from the C.P.R. as a result of the action for damages suffered by the collision.

The Helvetia was insured for £45,000, and was chartered by the Dominion Coal Co. for seven years, from 1911 to 1917 inclusive. As a result of the collision the Helvetia was sunk, and the insurance company paid for a total loss. The responsibility for the collision was divided between the two vessels concerned, the Empress of Britain being condemned to pay five-twelfths of the loss. Under the collision clause of the policy the insurance company was called upon to pay £19,560. In the enquiry to ascertain the amount payable by the Empress

of Britain, in the first instance, the Registrar's report, when he fixed £65,000, was based on the value of the vessel at Nov. 15, 1912, which was not the date of the collision, but the end of the first season of the charter. He took the loss of charter up to the same date and assessed it at £2,000. An appeal resulting from this decision, it was decided that the value of the vessel should have been taken as at Nov., 1917, the date of the expiry of the charter, but it was subsequently agreed as between the respective owners, that the lump sum of £67,000 be fixed without dividing the amount as between vessel and charter. The five-twelfths for which the Empress of Britain was liable, and which has been paid, is approximately £26,900, and the insurance company claims to have been subrogated to the position of the owner of the Helvetia in respect of that sum, and to recover it. The defence of the owners against that claim is that as by the decree of the Admiralty Division they were entitled to recover five-twelfths of their loss, the amount to which the insurance company was subrogated is five-twelfths of £45,000. The lower court had decided in favor of the insurance company on that point, hence the recent appeal. On this main point, the court decided that the insurance company is entitled to recover from the owners all sums which they received in respect of the vessel, up to £45,000, the amount of the policy.

Order re British Vessels Trading Between Foreign Ports.

A British order in council has been issued directing that from and after Dec. 1, 1915, no British steamship registered in the United Kingdom, exceeding 500 tons gross tonnage, shall carry any cargo from any foreign port to any other foreign port, whether or not such vessel while carrying such cargo calls at any intermediate port within the British Empire, unless the owner or charterer of such steamship has been granted exemption by license. The expression "foreign port" covers any port outside the British Empire.

A committee, appointed by the President of the British Board of Trade, has been formed to carry this order into effect, with power to grant exemption licenses in favor of owners and charterers, which may be general in reference to classes of ships on their voyages, or special.

The Sick and Distressed Seamen Fund for the financial year ended Mar. 31, 1915, showed receipts \$72,602.43, and expenditures \$65,397.85. The number of seamen treated was 3,030, and the number of hospital treatment days was 22,140. Under the provisions of the Canada Shipping Act, dues of 1½c. a ton, are levied on the registered tonnage of all vessels entering any port in Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia. Vessels of 100 tons and less pay once a year, and those of over 100 tons three times a year. No dues are collected from Ontario, as the act does not apply to that province. The number of vessels paying dues was 3,148, and the number of men employed on them was 65,221.

Removal of Navigation Obstructions.—The Marine Department, during the past fiscal year, expended \$8,528.94, on the removal of obstructions and dangers to navigation in various parts of the Dominion. The chief expenditures were, \$4,900 for removing the s.s. City of London wreck near Amherstburg, Ont.; \$1,450 for removing the wreck of the Charles Crawford in Lake St. Clair, and \$1,273.81 for removing the Rhoda wreck near Lachine, Que.