

The Batiscan-Bengore Head Case and the Dominion Wreck Commissioner.

At a meeting of the executive council of the Mercantile Marine Service Association, at Liverpool, Eng., recently, amongst other things discussed was that relating to the request for the intervention of the Imperial Government regarding the sentence passed by the Dominion Wreck Commissioner, on Capt. Green of the s.s. Batiscan, for responsibility for the collision with the s.s. Bengore Head in the St. Lawrence on Aug. 1, 1915, by which his certificate was suspended for two years, and provision made for the granting of a first mate's certificate for the second year. The Journal of Commerce, Liverpool, in dealing with the meeting, says "The meeting was much concerned to learn that the Board of Trade has intimated their inability to interfere in the case of the collision between the Bengore Head and the Batiscan, whereby the master's certificate of the latter steamer had been suspended for no less than two years, a savage sentence, which has aroused no little indignation throughout the profession. The council were naturally dissatisfied at the Board of Trade's reply and determined to continue their efforts to secure redress to a finding which was not concurred in, even by one of the assessors. The well known severity of the Canadian courts has on several occasions in the past been the cause of considerable agitation, and it is felt that no efforts should be spared to bring their judgments more in accord with those of similar courts in the United Kingdom."

The review of the evidence tendered in the case mentioned, with the court's judgment, were given in full in Canadian Railway and Marine World, for Oct. 1915, and were delivered by Capt. L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner. The judgment was assented to by Capt. F. Nash, one of the nautical assessors, the other, Capt. J. A. Murray, dissenting. He concurred on the main points, but dissented on the sentences passed, and so far as Capt. Green's sentence is concerned, suggested that he be granted a mate's certificate for the full period of the suspension of his master's certificate. By this it will be seen that the Commissioner and the two assessors are agreed on the main findings, and in Capt. Green's case, which is the only one which the paper in question comments upon, they differ regarding the granting of a mate's certificate for the first half of the suspension period. The Imperial Board of Trade has carefully reviewed the case, and expresses its inability to interfere, and in addition to this, the Dominion Admiralty Court has held that the Batiscan was solely to blame for the collision. It would therefore appear that the court's decision was correct, and that the sentence passed is, in view of the evidence adduced at the formal investigation, justifiable.

This is not the first time that the Journal of Commerce has developed hysteria about decisions of the Wreck Commissioner's court, and one cannot help but come to the conclusion that it is biased against marine decisions in Canada, as it has previously shown itself to be, without proper reason, against the St. Lawrence route. In the course of its remarks, previously quoted, it refers to "a finding which was not concurred in, even by one of the assessors." If this quoted portion means what it says, it is incorrect, as one of the assessors did concur in the Commissioner's decision. Probably what it intends to convey is that one of the assessors dissented, but in the excitement of the moment, a comma was placed wrongly.

Navigation Aids Throughout Winter.

Recent press reports stated that the Marine Department had arranged for the future continuous maintenance of navigation lights on the Great Lakes, throughout the winter. This is somewhat misleading, and has to some extent been misunderstood. The facts are that the Marine Department has hitherto, towards the close of navigation, removed the light keepers from Michipicoten Island, Michipicoten Island east end, Michipicoten harbor, Otter Island Gargantua, Corbeil Point and Ile Parisienne, and thereafter the lights have been discontinued. In addition to the difficulty experienced in removing the keepers from these stations after severe winter weather sets in, it has become apparent that those engaged in navigation up to the last moment on Lake Superior are considerably inconvenienced by the discontinuance of the lights and fog alarms at these points. While the Department has recognized that it is somewhat unpleasant for the keepers to remain at their posts throughout the winter, the conclusion has been reached that the shipping interests have become so important as to require a change of policy. Arrangements are therefore being made with the various keepers by which it is pro-

posed that they shall remain at their stations throughout the winter hereafter, so that the lights and fog alarms can be kept in operation as long as there is any necessity for doing so.

Toronto Harbor Improvements.

The work to be undertaken during 1916 will consist chiefly of reclamation of land, and the construction of seawall foundations. Most of this work will be undertaken in the western section, and will cover land reclamation along the Lake Shore Road toward Exhibition Park, where grading for the proposed boulevard is to be commenced. During 1915 about 3,800 ft. of foundation for the outside seawall was laid, and during this year it is proposed to lay the concrete superstructure thereon. A further 4,800 ft. of foundation will also be laid, extending easterly from the point where work stopped for the winter. On the eastern section, practically the only work to be carried out will be the construction of a lift bridge over the Don River. Apart from this the only work to be undertaken on the east side will be the overhauling of certain work done by subcontractors, and of which complaints had been dealt with by the Dominion Government.

Sault Ste. Marie Canals Traffic.

The following commerce passed through the Sault Ste. Marie Canals during 1915.

ARTICLES		CANADIAN CANAL	U. S. CANAL	TOTAL	
Copper.....	Eastbound	Short tons	20,331	136,105	156,436
Grain.....	"	Bushels	24,922,096	39,833,151	64,755,247
Building stone.....	"	Short tons			
Flour.....	"	Barrels	2,720,828	5,716,009	8,436,837
Iron ore.....	"	Short tons	4,050,350	41,161,754	45,212,104
Pig iron.....	"	"	6,770	10,830	17,600
Lumber.....	"	M. ft. b.m.	45,916	410,535	456,451
Wheat.....	"	Bushels	63,428,417	192,053,141	255,481,558
General merchandise.....	"	Short tons	117,333	214,831	332,164
Passengers.....	"	Number	13,100	12,837	25,937
Coal, hard.....	Westbound	Short tons	58,133	1,973,597	2,030,730
Coal, soft.....	"	"	416,248	10,910,080	11,326,328
Flour.....	"	Barrels		100	100
Grain.....	"	Bushels	873	31,250	31,623
Manufactured iron.....	"	Short tons	22,370	171,311	194,181
Iron ore.....	"	"		1,500	1,500
Salt.....	"	Barrels	46,981	653,256	699,337
General merchandise.....	"	Short tons	302,388	960,846	1,263,234
Passengers.....	"	Number	11,858	12,541	24,399
Summary.					
Vessel passages.....		Number	4,323	76,910	21,233
Registered tonnage.....		Net	8,480,300	47,918,847	56,399,147
Freight—Eastbound.....		Short tons	6,935,083	49,434,159	56,369,242
—Westbound.....		"	806,228	14,114,834	14,921,062
Total freight.....		"	7,741,311	63,548,993	71,290,304

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT FOR THE SEASONS 1914 and 1915.

Items	Season 1914	Season 1915	
Vessels : Steamers.....	Number	14,394	17,699
Sailing.....	"	1,682	1,334
Unregistered.....	"	2,041	1,650
Total.....		18,717	21,233
Lockages.....	"	13,502	13,808
Tonnage : Registered.....	Net	41,986,339	56,399,147
Freight.....	Short tons	55,369,934	71,290,304
Passengers.....	Numbers	59,801	50,336
Coal : Hard.....	Short tons	2,240,505	2,030,730
Soft.....	"	12,246,716	11,326,328
Flour.....	Barrels	9,715,085	8,436,937
Wheat.....	Bushels	150,284,095	255,481,558
Grain.....	"	68,338,072	64,756,870
Manufactured and pig iron.....	Short tons	239,633	211,781
Salt.....	Barrels	777,208	699,337
Copper.....	Short tons	91,764	156,436
Iron Ore.....	"	31,413,765	45,213,604
Lumber.....	m. ft. b.m.	452,148	456,451
Building Stone.....	Short tons		
General Merchandise.....	"	1,317,304	1,595,398

The Canadian canal was opened April 13 and closed Dec. 16, 1915; season, 248 days.
The U.S. canal was opened April 17 and closed Dec. 20, 1915; season, 248 days.