

Sorel. Only those who are personal friends of Messrs. McKenzie & McCarthy are favored with that patronage.

In the spring of 1876, four captains of dredges were dismissed from the service, and their duties were assigned to the engineers on board of the dredges, in addition to the duties of these latter as engineers, although they were not at all equal to the command and management of dredges, and could not occupy those places without great detriment to the service; at the same time offers of employment as second captains on board of the same dredges, with the same wages as they had had as captains, were made to the dismissed captains, in order, no doubt, to afford the engineers opportunities of learning from these men; not one of them would accept these humiliating offers, and they were discharged. Why were those men dismissed, who had been tried during the previous years and found capable of commanding and working the dredges properly, and replaced by men who knew nothing besides their business as engineers and had enough to do to discharge its duties fitly? And if those captains were only fit to be mates, why pay them the wages of captains while doing the duties of mates only? These changes must have been made for motives, less fit to be acknowledged than that of economising the resources of the Dominion, and it may be said that favoritism was one of the motives, if not the only motive, of this unjust and stupid action.

Experience has since shown that these changes have been extremely prejudicial to the interests of the Commission and the advancement of the works, because the incapacity of these engineer-captains has been the cause of many serious accidents happening to the dredges, six of which were disabled in one week, which occasioned considerable delay in the execution of the works. In one case especially the incapacity of the engineer-captain of dredge No. 9 caused the dredge to be damaged to the amount of more than two thousand dollars, and that merely because he did not know how to go about recovering a certain portion of the mechanism of the dredge, which had fallen into the water, a thing which all captains of dredges know perfectly well how to do, and they consider that knowledge quite elementary in their business. After having broken the essential portions of the dredge, without succeeding in his efforts, he had to employ a diver to recover the broken portions of the machinery, which caused a great loss of time, and cost a great deal.

Since that spring the services of divers have been required several times, in consequence of similar accidents, and that morely because the engineer-captains do not know how to manage the dredges under their charge. Before that summer divers were never employed to recover broken portions of the machinery of the dredges, the captains themselves recovering them without loss of time and without expense. Nevertheless, the captain of dredge No. 9 was not dismissed.

About the same time the captain of the steamer waiting on dredge No. 9 accidentally caused a collision between the steamer and the dredge, whereby the latter was slightly damaged; he was suspended from office for a month.

Mr. Maxime Lacouture, a first-class engineer, had served the Commissioners for six years, to the satisfaction of all; he was dismissed from the service unjustly and without cause, and replaced by another.

Mr. P. Pigeon, blacksmith, was also dismissed from the service, after having worked two years for the Commissioners, and replaced by another, without any reason.

Mr. X. Courtois, a servant of the Commissioners for more than ten years, had always done his duty well as captain of a barge and watchman; he was dismissed without any reason and replaced by a stranger who was not qualified to fill his place.

Mr. Casimir Lemay, captain of a barge and master caulker to the Commissioners, was dismissed in the spring without any reason, and replaced by another less capable than himself.

Mr. Théodore Marcotte, second captain on board of a dredge, did his duty well and was capable as second officer; he was dismissed as he was about to begin in the spring, and replaced by another who is not qualified to discharge the duties of that office.