

Investigation Into the Stranding of the s.s. Acadian.

Commander H. St. G. Lindsay, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Capt. Jas. Ewart and Jas. McMaugh, as assessors, held an investigation at Toronto, Jan. 30, into the stranding of the s.s. Acadian, no. 124,258, registered in Glasgow and owned by the Canada Interlake Line Ltd., on shoals near Sulphur Island, Lake Huron, on Nov. 9, 1913. She left Cleveland, Ohio, Nov. 8, for Port Arthur, Ont., with 2,540 tons of general cargo; 200 tons of iron gas pipes were stowed on the after part of the upper deck, and 195 tons of bunker coal below, the ship's draught being 15¼ ft. forward and 16¾ ft. aft. She passed Sarnia at 8 p.m. the same day, and at 5.35 p.m. Port Huron light vessel was abeam, and the patent log steamed and set. Everything appears to have gone well during the night of the 8th and morning of the 9th, and a departure was taken from abeam of Point aux Barques light, distance 7 3-10 miles, at 3.50 a.m. on the 9th, the ship then steering N. by W. by compass, and the log showing 68 4-10 miles. The wind appears to have freshened up from the northward with snow at 8 a.m., and at noon was blowing a hard gale, with constant snow, and it appears that the steering became difficult, the ship's head falling off to the westward, bringing the wind and sea on her starboard beam, and occasionally coming right up into the wind and sea and then falling off to the eastward, bringing the wind and sea on her port beam. At 3.15 p.m., during a short clearance in the weather, land was sighted nearly ahead, and also on the port bow, the vessel's head being, it appears, at that time about N. by W. by compass. The land was recognized by the master as being Thunder Bay Island and was distant about three miles, according to his judgment. He then seems to have decided to take his vessel into Thunder Bay for shelter, and with that idea in view kept the ship away to W. S.W., and after running, as he supposed, three miles, he hauled up to N.W. ½ W., intending to proceed into the Bay and anchor; but while on that course the vessel struck and stranded on a shoal south of Sulphur Island at 4.20 p.m., where she remained with her forward holds full of water until Nov. 19, when she was towed off and ultimately taken to port of Ecorse, Mich., and placed in dry dock for repairs, which were found to be very extensive.

The court, after carefully considering the evidence adduced, is of opinion that the stranding was caused by the poor judgment of the master, inasmuch as he was not justified in assuming, in the position he was, three miles off, what he took to be Thunder Bay Island, without taking means to verify same by a cast of the lead. The events which followed show that he must have been a greater distance than that to the southward of the Island, when he decided to run into Thunder Bay to take shelter, and it was not good seamanship, under the prevailing weather conditions, to attempt to take the proposed shelter, without being perfectly assured of the ship's correct position. It is the court's unanimous opinion that, on seeing that the vessel had made a fairly good course, within a little more than half a point of her intended course from her last point of departure, viz., 7 3-10 miles off Point aux Barques light, the vessel having had sufficient steerage way to bring her up occasionally head to the wind and sea, the proper thing to do under the circumstances when he sighted the land, was to have headed her off to the eastward, and taken her out into deep water, and away from a dangerous lee

shore. The vessel, although making heavy weather, was, according to the evidence, able to weather the gale, being in good trim and condition at the time.

The court therefore severely censures the master, Robt. McIntyre, for his error and lack of judgment in trying to take his ship into Thunder Bay during thick, heavy weather, with nothing to guide him, and from a position which could not be assumed to be correct; but on account of his conduct in connection with salving and re-floating the vessel, does not deal with his certificate. The court criticizes the fact of this vessel carrying iron pipes on deck, especially at a time when bad weather was likely to be met with, and also expresses surprise that no means whatever were taken to secure the deck load. This appears to the court to be taking an unusual and improper risk, both to ship and cargo, to say nothing of the risk of life and limb to the crew. A patent sounding machine would have been invaluable on this vessel, as, from the evidence on the question of taking casts of the lead, it would appear that under the weather conditions which existed on the afternoon of the 9th, it was considered impossible to use the hand lead. The reasons alleged for this do not appear to the court to be either justifiable or in keeping with ordinary seamanship, for if it were possible and safe, as shown in the evidence, to send someone aft to read the log every hour, along the sea swept main deck, it would be quite safe and practicable to have a man lashed to the rail, on forward deck, under the bridge, who could have used the lead effectively.

The Consolidation of the Canada Shipping Act.

On the introduction of the bill for the consolidation of the Canada Shipping Act, in the House of Commons, Mar. 11, the Minister of Marine said that it had been thought desirable by the department for several years that the different acts having reference to the Canada Shipping Act, should be consolidated, with certain amendments of a more or less lengthy nature. He gave a summary of the various legislation regarding shipping, from the Imperial Merchants Shipping Act of 1854, and amendments and adaptations to Canadian conditions, to the present time, and stated that it is the intention to have the consolidated act based on the latest Imperial legislation, with such substantive alterations as may be considered necessary for the more local conditions.

Part 1 deals with the registration and classification of vessels, covering the power to appoint surveyors of vessels by the Minister, instead of, as at present, by the Governor in Council; the registration of the original managing owners of vessels, as well as changes in ownership; the licensing of such vessels as are exempt from registration; the proper national colors for Canadian vessels; Part 2 deals with the certificates of masters, mates and engineers; Parts 3 and 4 covers the legislation relating to seamen and the shipping of seamen on inland waters, and sick and distressed mariners; Part 5 deals with pilotage, the only important change proposed respecting which is one by which the Minister of Marine constitutes the pilotage authority of Canada. The intention is to have pilotage administration as one system throughout the Dominion, with local pilotage authorities, more under the Department's control than heretofore, with a more uniform administration of the law than has hitherto obtained. A provision will cover the compulsory retirement of all pilots at the age of 70, and vessels trading between Canadian ports and New York, and U. S. ports north of New York,

and between Canadian ports and San Francisco, and other U. S. ports north of San Francisco will be exempt from pilotage tolls; Part 6 covers steamship inspection, examination and licensing of engineers; Parts 8 to 18 deal, respectively, with safety, wreck and salvage, special shipping enquiries and courts, lighthouses, buoys and beacons and Sable Island, public harbors and harbor masters, port wardens, coasting trade of Canada, delivery of goods, liability of carriers by water, legal proceedings and supplemental matter.

It was decided on the second reading, Mar. 12, to refer the bill to a select committee, and to have it printed and distributed among those interested in shipping in the Dominion, in order that any objections to the provisions may be made, and to give those objecting an opportunity of appearing before the committee to state their objections.

The Proposed Dry Dock at Sault Ste. Marie.

The bylaw which was passed recently by the ratepayers of Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., to subsidize the building of a dry dock there, provides for a bonus of \$20,000 a year for 20 years, for a fixed assessment on the property for school taxes of \$750,000 for 20 years, for exemption from general taxes for five years, and for a fixed assessment of \$500,000 for general taxes for 15 years.

The agreement provides that work shall be commenced by Apr. 1, on the laying out and construction of the dry dock and ship-building plant, and the equipment is to be completed to the satisfaction of the Dominion Public Works Department so as to earn the annual Government subsidy of 3% for 20 years on an expenditure of not less than \$1,338,026.76, the whole to be completed and equipped ready for operation by Apr. 1, 1916.

The dry dock is to be built of concrete, and is to be not less than the following dimensions:—

Clear length inside gate sill	650 ft.
Clear width at gate sill	65 ft.
Width at coping level	90 ft.
Width in dock chamber at coping level	106 ft. 8 ins.
Width at sill level	93 ft. 4 ins.
Width at bottom	80 ft.
Depth on sill below ordinary low water level of St. Mary River	18 ft. 6 ins.

Payments of the corporation subsidy will be made annually on Nov. 1, the first of such payments being due on Nov. 1, 1916, provided the plant is completed and ready for operation at the time stated. The site for the plant comprises a water lot of about 5 5-10 acres.

The agreement with the city was made with F. H. Clergue, and the Lake Superior Dry Dock and Construction Co., Ltd., has been formed for the purpose of carrying on the work, the Ontario Legislature being asked to confirm the transfer of all rights under the agreement, to the company.

Steel vs. Wooden Hatch Covers. In connection with the vessel losses in the Great Lakes storm of Nov., 1913, it has been pointed out to Canadian Railway and Marine World, by a well known lake captain, that each of the vessels lost was equipped with steel hatch covers, and that none of the vessels equipped with wooden hatch covers, out in the storm, was lost. He has formed an opinion that the steel covers would be battered, or bulged in, during the storm, and the vessels flooded, but in the case of wooden hatch covers, they would not be so affected, owing to their general resiliency. Whether this be so or not, it is interesting to note that the St. Lawrence and Chicago Steam Navigation Co.'s new vessel, now being built at Collingwood, Ont., is having its hatch covers built of 4 in. spruce instead of steel.