

have had to rely a good deal on guess-work in finding the cheapest method of transportation.

#### Lumber Rates Down

Ocean freight rates on lumber cargoes from British Columbia and Puget Sound ports are now virtually open, so far as shipments to the Atlantic seaboard are concerned, and operators are taking what they can get without regard to schedules and agreements with other parties. Some months ago "a gentlemen's agreement" was negotiated setting certain rates that should govern shipments of lumber, but this has now been set aside and is no longer a factor to be observed. Within the last few days rates of \$12 a thousand have been offered, which is the lowest on record, with perhaps one exception when the W. R. Grace & Company and American-Hawaiian Company were operating heavily in the intercoastal trade and \$11 a thousand ruled for a short time. The result of the slash in rates is seen in the enormous business developed in lumber and shingle shipments from the northwest to the Atlantic seaboard. Against such competition as the water route is offering these days, the railroads are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain a share of eastbound lumber business. Tramps are again active and steam schooners are numerous in the lumber trade between the northwest and California markets.

#### Shipbuilding and Shipping

Captain M. D. Harbord, president of the Victoria (B. C.) Shipowners, Ltd., will leave shortly for Ottawa to ascertain the attitude of the Federal Government towards a continuance of wooden shipbuilding in Victoria. The Meighen Government put the shipowners on their feet two or three years ago as an unemployment relief measure by advancing \$700,000 as a loan for the construction of three wooden barquentines for the lumber trade, a sum of about \$300,000 to be raised by the sale of shares locally. The cost of the first vessel, the S. F. Tolmie, which is now engaged in the trans-Pacific trade, was considerably above the estimate and the Government declined to extend all the backing it had originally proposed. This resulted in a general shut-down in the shipbuilding operations. The company is anxious to commence again and hopes to obtain from the government an assurance that the balance of the loan will be made.

British Columbia business interests are urging the Canadian Government Merchant Marine to inaugurate a regular freight service between British Columbia and Mexico and Central America. It is held that Canadian capital is extensively invested in Mexico and that if transportation facilities were satisfactory, big orders would be placed with British Columbia firms. There is a big demand for lumber in Mexico and this could be supplied by Canada as easily as by the United States. The British Columbia Cement Company recently sent a large shipment of cement to Mexico and it is

stated that, with regular sailings arranged, important trade development could be brought about. It is also being urged that business with the Fiji Islands should be encouraged. The Canadian Merchant Marine has brought a large shipment of bananas and other tropical fruit from these islands within the last few days, and if these goods find a favorable market here there is a strong likelihood that Fijian fruit may be a big item in future shipments from the Southern Pacific.

The Canadian Robert Dollar Company's steamship Bessie Dollar, while bound for the Orient, encountered a severe storm about 600 miles off Cape Flattery a few days ago, and is now being repaired. The pilot house, bridge and other portions of the superstructure were dislocated and badly battered.

After a year of inactivity the Consolidated Whaling Company, of Victoria, will resume operations this season, and its fleet of whalers is now undergoing overhaul in anticipation of their sailing to the west coast. The first ship will probably go out in April. Last year no whaling was done off the British Columbia coast because of market conditions. The decline in prices as a result of the increasing supply of other kinds of oil made whaling unprofitable and the company's operations were closed down. The market has shown a tendency towards substantial improvement this year.

Shipping in the Far East is paralyzed to a considerable extent as a result of a strike of Chinese seamen for increased pay. There is said to be little chance of an early settlement, and the Canadian Pacific liners Monteagle and Empress of Japan are tied up as part of the idle fleet at Hong Kong. It is stated that 170 ships, most of them British, with an aggregate tonnage of 250,000, are tied up and that both ocean and river traffic are at a standstill. The Empress of Russia will also be tied up in a few days, and the Empress of Asia, which is now bound for the Orient, may be affected by the strike as well, thus tying up practically the whole of the Canadian Pacific ocean fleet.

The inquiry into the Canadian Importer disaster has been concluded, but the mystery of the near-foundering of this steamship is still unsolved. In his finding, Wreck Commissioner J. D. MacPherson strongly reprimands the captain and first officer for the manner in which they gave evidence, declaring that there was a studied reluctance to give the commission the facts of the case, and urged that a new inquiry be held as soon as possible. It is held that the officers of the ship were guilty of negligence by ignoring an elementary precaution by emptying one of the ballast tanks when the ship was already showing a decided list.

An investigation will probably be held in a few days to determine the responsibility for the collision between the C. P. R. steamer Princess Royal and the Pacific Great Eastern tugboat Clin-

ton, resulting in the sinking of the latter at the entrance to Vancouver harbor.

One hundred men are at present working at the Canadian National Railway Shipyard at Hays Cove, Prince Rupert. The work going on includes an extensive overhaul of the Grand Trunk Pacific steamer Prince Albert, repairs to eight or ten fishing schooners and the construction of the Francois Lake ferry. The building of the deckhouse and interior fittings of the ferry boat has been commenced, the woodwork on the cradle being completed. The Prince Albert is being generally overhauled and surveyed for re-classification.

#### PERSONAL

Mr. William Anderson Black, of the well known Halifax shipping firm of Pickford and Black, was elected a director of the Royal Bank of Canada at a recent meeting to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Justice T. Sherman Rogers. Mr. Black is a very well known figure in marine circles in the Nova Scotian port, and the province generally.

There has been some talk in the Maritimes of making Mr. Wm. Duff the new Deputy Minister of Marine. Mr. Duff would be a good man for the post, having been actively connected with maritime interests for the best part of his life. It is thought that if Mr. Duff was made Minister, there would then be no need for a special minister of Fisheries. It is felt that a Maritime Province man should be the Deputy, and as there has been a rumour that Mr. Alex. Johnson would return to the British Empire Steel Corporation, Mr. Duff has been singled out to fill his shoes.

Captain J. F. Simmons has been appointed harbour master of the port of Montreal, to fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of Captain Toussaint Bourassa, who has been in the service of the Harbour Commissioners for the past thirty years. Captain Simmons has been deputy harbour master since the year 1912. His appointment was signalled by occurring on the same day as his marriage, and before taking up his new duties, Captain Simmons and his bride will take a trip to the old country for their honeymoon, lasting about six weeks.

It is announced from Montreal that Captain D. H. Pearson, who was formerly publicity agent of the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services Ltd., and later with the C. P. R. when that company took over the C. P. O. S. has been appointed editor of the British Dominions Trade, a journal devoted to the interests of Empire trade and its development. The close knowledge possessed by Captain Pearson of European and Empire affairs, on which he is a recognised authority will make him a valuable asset to the paper, and ensure his success in his new post.