

## The Canadian Atlantic Ocean Mail Port.

As announced in Canadian Railway and Marine World for December, the schedule of Atlantic sailings for the C.P.R. mail steamships for the winter shows St. John, N.B., as the Canadian port. In previous years a call was made at Halifax, N.S., where mails were landed, after which the vessels proceeded to St. John. The decision to make St. John the sole port this winter has aroused considerable opposition in Halifax, and immediately the official announcement was made the matter was taken up by the Halifax Board of Trade, and the Dominion Premier was appealed to with the view of getting Halifax reinstated as a port of call. The Premier promised to interview the President of the C.P.R., and as a result received the following letter from Sir Thos. Shaughnessy explaining the company's attitude:—

"I wish that it were possible to comply with your request to have our passenger ships call at Halifax on the inward and outward trips this winter, but as I said to you personally, I am convinced that it cannot be done in the interest of the country. The war has brought upon us a condition of things with reference to our Atlantic steamship service, that could not have been foreseen, and that it will be difficult for us to satisfactorily meet, even with our greatest efforts. As you know, a great many of our ships have been taken by the Admiralty, and we have found it impossible to charter a sufficient number to replace them. In these circumstances, we must either utilize such steamships as are available to the utmost, or we must permit a substantial percentage of our Canadian exports to be diverted from our Canadian ports. Apart from all other considerations, the Halifax call would involve a delay to our passenger ships of from two to three days on each round voyage, with a like reduction in their freight carrying efficiency. Our endeavor must be this winter to avoid unnecessary detention of a single hour, so as to secure the greatest advantage of their carrying capacity. By running direct to and from St. John, in these exceptional circumstances to which I have referred, no precedent is being established. When normal conditions return, the Halifax mail service and the terms upon which it is to be conducted, will be open for consideration."

This letter was discussed at a public meeting at Halifax, together with a letter from Sir Robt. Borden, wherein he stated that under the circumstances the Government will take into immediate consideration the forwarding of mails by the Admiralty transports sailing to and from Halifax during the winter."

As a result of the discussion a telegram was sent to the Premier, stating that both communications were considered unsatisfactory, and alleging that the contention that vessels would lose three days on each round trip cannot be borne out by facts. In backing up this statement, it is stated that the vessels work on a 35 day schedule for the round trip, and that it can be done in 34 days, including the call at Halifax. This is explained as follows:—Liverpool to Halifax, 10 days; stop at Halifax, 1 day; Halifax to St. John, 1 day; stop at St. John, 5 days; St. John to Halifax, 1 day; stop at Halifax, 1 day; Halifax to Liverpool, 10 days; stop at Liverpool, 5 days; total, 34 days.

The Premier subsequently replied to the Board of Trade stating that no subsidy arrangements had been made with the C.P.R. for the winter, and that the company can, of course, control the destination of its vessels, but that the Government controls the disposition of subsidy, an equal portion of

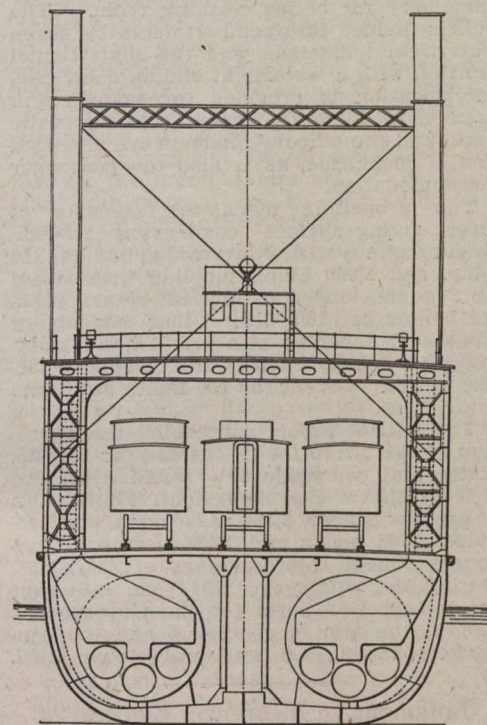
which will be allocated to the direct transmission of mails to and from Halifax by the best vessels that can be procured.

A further meeting was called at Halifax to discuss the whole situation, and a resolution was passed protesting against the elimination of Halifax from the mail route, and calling upon the Government to compel mail steamships to call there.

On Dec. 3, a deputation waited on the Premier, Minister of Trade and Commerce, Minister of Railways and Canals, and the Postmaster General, to press the Halifax protest, and was given to understand that the matter will be taken up again with the C.P.R., and that the Government will do everything possible to get the company to continue the Halifax call.

## The Loss of the s.s. Constance.

An investigation into the cause of the loss of the s.s. Constance, which foundered in the Gulf of Georgia, Oct. 2, 1915, was held at Vancouver, B.C., recently, by Capt. J. D. Macpherson, Wreck Commissioner for



Cross Section, Car Ferry Steamship, Scotia 2.

British Columbia, assisted by Commander C. Unwin, R.N.R., and Capt. R. C. Proctor, as nautical assessors. Following is the judgment:—The evidence was in most instances of a most contradictory and evasive nature, that of the master, Harry Smith, being particularly so. The court is unanimous in its opinion that the loss was solely due to the Constance being, under her master's direction, improperly loaded to such an extent that she was unable to cope with the heavy weather met with when she got into the Gulf of Georgia. It is also of the opinion that the master showed little judgment and less prudence in not seeking shelter under the existing conditions, before it was too late, more especially as not only had he 6 extra persons on board, which he somewhat ingeniously described as stowaways, but he had also a gasoline launch in tow, with 7 persons on board, making a total of 13 persons, in addition to his own crew, whose lives and personal belongings were under his charge. The court therefore considers the master solely to blame for the loss of the Constance, and suspends his certificate of competency as master, no. 3299,

for 3 months, from Oct. 2, 1915, to Jan. 2, 1916. The court considers that it has shown a considerable amount of leniency to the master in suspending his certificate for this period only, but it has taken into consideration the fact that he has lately been fined \$100 in the Vancouver police court for carrying the 6 persons before mentioned on board the Constance, when she was not licensed to carry passengers, thus contravening sec. 671, chap. 113, part 7 Canada Shipping Act. Had this fine not been imposed the court would have suspended his certificate for a considerably longer period, not only for the reasons already mentioned, coupled with the evasive and unsatisfactory manner in which he gave his evidence, but also as a warning and a deterrent to all interested in the shipping business on this coast, that the laws as laid down in the Canada Shipping Act cannot be violated with impunity.

## Decision as to Use of Family Tickets.

The right of a ferry company to determine the extent of use of a family ticket was upheld by Chancellor Boyd in Toronto recently, on a motion by the Village of Fort Erie to have the Fort Erie and Buffalo Ferry Co. act upon a decision of the trial judge, who, on the asking of the village, compelled the ferry company to revert to an old custom. Under regulations the company was bound to provide residents with family tickets, but when the company found that the public were abusing the privilege by permitting others than members of a family to make use of the tickets, they imposed certain restrictions. The village took action and got a verdict against the company. Chancellor Boyd agreed that the whole question rested upon the interpretation of the word "family," and he decided that "family" in the sense intended by the ferry company meant parents and children of parents living in one home. Servants, he decided, were barred from use of a family ticket, and he found for the ferry company, which has the right to name those who should use such tickets.

**Wreck Commissioners' Investigations in 1914.**—During 1914, 26 formal, 10 preliminary and 1 departmental investigations into causes of wrecks and marine casualties were held. As results of these, 3 masters' certificates were suspended for one month, 2 for three months, 1 for six months and 1 for a year; 1 master was fined and 9 reprimanded or censured. Two mates' certificates were suspended for three months, 1 mate was cautioned and 1 exonerated; 2 second mates' certificates were suspended for three months, 1 cautioned and 1 exonerated; 3 pilots' certificates were suspended for three months, and 1 was cancelled. Regarding four wrecks, no blame was attributed. The total casualties were to 257 vessels of 212,842.85 tons, and the loss of \$5,211,700 and 1,114 lives.

**The Interstate Commerce Commission and Lake Traffic.**—In connection with the recent cases dealt with by the Interstate Commerce Commission under the Panama Canal Act, whereby railway companies operating in the United States have been compelled to cease ownership of lake lines, the commission on Nov. 30 dismissed applications on behalf of seven of the companies concerned, for a rehearing involving permission to continue such operation, and making the order to discontinue, effective Dec. 15. The railway companies affected are Pennsylvania Rd., Northern Central Ry., New York Central Rd., Erie Rd., Grand Trunk Ry., Lehigh Valley Rd., and Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Rd.