

bell on the light ship stationed on the Sandheads off the Fraser River in the Strait of Georgia. It is probable that this installation will be followed by others if a sufficient number of steamships operating on the Pacific will supply themselves with the necessary receiving apparatus. The Department has a number of these installed along the Atlantic, and on inland waters, and it is expected that the number will be materially increased during next year. Experience has shown that bells placed on stands on the bottom, and bells electrically connected with the shore cannot be kept in operation with sufficient reliability to be satisfactory, and the Department's later installations are now placed from a light ship, where they can be raised for examination and overhaul without delay, or they are attached to a buoy and rung by the action of the waves alone.

The Burning of the s.s. Volturno.

The s.s. Volturno, which was burned at sea Oct. 10, when a number of lives were lost, was owned by Canadian Northern Steamships Ltd., Toronto, and operated under charter by the Uranium Steamship Co., a British concern, on a line between Hamburg, Halifax and New York. D. B. Hanna, Second Vice President, Canadian Northern Steamships Ltd., Toronto, is representative of the Uranium Company in America. The Volturno, which was bought about the end of 1909, on the incorporation of Canadian Northern Steamships Ltd., was built at Glasgow, Scotland, in 1906. She was of steel construction, and of the following dimensions:—length 340 ft., breadth 43 ft., depth 20.7 ft., tonnage 3,581 gross. She had accommodation for about 1,300 third class passengers and about 24 cabin passengers. The absolute necessity of having all transatlantic passenger steamships equipped with wireless telegraph apparatus was again demonstrated by the success which attended its use in this case, as within a comparatively short time of the distress signals being dispatched, sufficient help was at hand, though the heavy seas hampered the work of removing the passengers. Another interesting detail of this work is undoubtedly the use of oil in calming the sea. A large quantity was poured from an oil tank steamship, and there is no doubt that this enabled a greater number of lives to be saved than would otherwise have been the case.

Great Lakes Navigation and the Montreal Route.

A deputation representing navigation companies operating on the Great Lakes waited on the Ministers of Marine and of Trade and Commerce in Ottawa Oct. 17 to discuss a number of matters. The chief subject dealt with was the coasting regulations. Last year the coasting regulations were suspended in order to allow U.S. vessels to load grain at Port Arthur and Fort William, where they were to remain for the winter, and then proceed to a Canadian port on the opening of navigation in the spring. This was done with the view of obviating congestion at the head of the lakes, and providing additional storage accommodation for grain during the winter. At the time, the Dominion Marine Association opposed the suspension of the regulations in this respect, but did not press the matter very vigorously, as it was designed to relieve an abnormal condition, but it is now presenting a vigorous opposition to a renewal of the suspension for the coming winter. The ground taken by the Association is that if the Dominion Government allows such a suspension this year, it should

only be done on the condition that the U.S. Government should abrogate its dues and limitations so as to allow free entry to U.S. ports of Canadian shipping in a similar manner. On this matter, the Minister of Trade and Commerce stated that no decision had been reached or considered.

The question of rates between the head of the lakes and Georgian Bay ports was also discussed. It had been stated that these rates were higher than those of U.S. vessels from the same ports to Buffalo, and it is contended that this is not so, figures being quoted to show that on the general average the Canadian rates are as low as those on the U.S. route. The Minister of Trade and Commerce, in dealing with the matter, stated that in 1912 over 40% of the wheat from the west went out by way of Buffalo, and this year the proportion promises to be larger, and it is believed that the question of rates has a material bearing on the subject. Figures compiled by the Railways and Canals Department show the Canadian lake rate to be higher than the U.S. rate; the rate from Fort William to Buffalo being 0.103, and from Fort William to Georgian Bay ports 0.163 per ton per mile. We stated that shipping men are inclined to place the blame for the divergence of traffic on the Montreal end, alleging a lack of facilities there, and maintaining also that a large factor is more favorable insurance rates at U.S. ports. Another influence is the uncertainty of ocean tonnage from Montreal.

Wreck Commissioner's Judgment Reversed in the Lake Manitoba Case.

The Dominion Government has reversed the judgment of the Wreck Commissioner, Commander H. St. G. Lindsay, re the grounding the C.P.R. Lake Manitoba on the Isle of Orleans, July 28, by which judgment, A. Lachance, the pilot, who is President of the Corporation of Pilots of Quebec, was suspended until the completion of the present season of navigation. After hearing the evidence in the case, the Wreck Commissioner, assisted by two assessors, came to the conclusion that the casualty was entirely due to the negligence of the pilot, inasmuch as he totally disregarded the rule of the road in porting for a bright light on his port bow, and also in not being aware of the exact position of his vessel with regard to the land. The pilot has now been reinstated, the reason as published, being that he has always been regarded as an efficient officer, and that it has been urged that as conditions of navigation in the river are constantly changing, a pilot under temporary suspension would have no knowledge of the changes when he resumed his calling, and it is stated that the reinstatement is regarded as being in the interests of navigation.

It is a question whether it is good policy to interfere with a judgment to the extent of practically reversing it, especially when neither the evidence nor the finding is questioned. The grounds quoted for the reinstatement of the pilot have no connection with either the evidence or the judgment, but are quite outside all the points concerned, and such a decision can only mean, to carry the thing to its logical conclusion, that in future no sentence of suspension can be passed on any pilot. In view of this the Pilotage Act should be amended forthwith, and the pilot of the New Zealand Shipping Co.'s s.s. Whakatane, who was recently suspended, should be immediately reinstated. At least, one of the weak points of the reason given for Pilot Lachance's reinstatement is that he has already been under suspension for nearly three months, and the navigation season has only another month

to run, so if any loss of knowledge of the condition of affairs in the St. Lawrence was likely to occur, it has already taken place, and any further problematical loss of knowledge for the remainder of the season would not much matter.

The matter has given rise to considerable comment in marine circles, and a number of suggestions have been made to obviate what is becoming a ridiculous state of affairs. Some of these cover the entire removal of wreck investigations from the jurisdiction of the Marine Department, making the Wreck Commissioner's Court subsidiary to the Department of Justice, and depriving the Marine Department of any right to revise judgments and sentences, and also fining only of pilots for errors of judgment, etc., which result in the damage to, or loss of, a vessel, grading such fine according to the gravity of the offence, and extending payments over a stated period, by deducting a percentage from fees due the pilot for services rendered to each vessel during that period. There are certainly some good points in the suggestions mentioned, especially the bringing of the Wreck Commissioner's Court under the Department of Justice, leaving one of the superior courts of justice to be the final court of appeal in all matters pertaining thereto. In all cases where a pilot has committed any offence under the Pilotage Acts, in addition to a fine, the conviction should be endorsed on his license.

Since the foregoing was put in type, we have been officially advised that the Minister of Marine made a full and careful enquiry into all the facts of the case, and having satisfied himself that the period for which the license in question was suspended might be shortened, he so ordered and the license was accordingly returned to the pilot forthwith.

This confirms our opinion, as previously expressed, that decisions of the Wreck Commissioner should not be subject to reversal by the political head of a government department, on whom political influence may be brought to bear, but should be only appealable to a judicial body.

Welland Ship Canal Contracts Awarded.

The contract for section 2 of the Welland Ship Canal is reported to have been awarded to Baldry, Yerburch and Hutchinson, a British firm with a branch at St. Catharines, Ont. The amount of the contract is approximately \$5,500,000. Section 2 extends from bridge 2 to bridge 5, about 4½ miles, and includes locks 2 and 3. Lock 3 will be located immediately north of the present canal, and at its head on the east side will be an equalizing basin or pond of 150 acres. Below lock 3 there will be a heavy cutting through Homer village to the bed of Ten Mile Creek above Carleton St., St. Catharines, and just below Carleton St., lock 2 will be located. The canal at the head of lock 2 will be at an elevation of 335½ ft. above sea level. Full details of the complete work, including lock construction, were given in Canadian Railway and Marine World for July and August.

The contract for section 3 was awarded to O'Brien and Doheny, and Quinlan and Robertson, Montreal, jointly, and not to the first named firm only, as mentioned in our last issue.

The Edward Sinclair Lumber Co., Newcastle, N.B., have been given a contract for 41,000 ties for the construction railway in connection with the new canal.

The Department of Public Works will receive, to Nov. 17, tenders for the construction of a pile protection work at Rainy River, Thunder Bay and Rainy River District, Ont.