

Canadian Lake Protective Association's Annual Meeting.

At the annual meeting in Toronto Feb. 3, the ex-officio Chairman, W. E. Burke, of the Canada Steamship Lines, President of the Dominion Marine Association, presided. The report, which is given in full below, was unanimously adopted. The following were elected as the executive committee: W. J. Bassett, Bassett Steamship Co.; R. Duguid, Canada Steamship Lines; G. E. Fair, Farrar Transportation Co.; Robt. Fraser, Montreal Transportation Co.; Gilbert Johnston, Canada Steamship Lines; A. E. Mathews, J. T. Mathews, Mathews Steamship Co.; W. L. Reed, Canadian Northwest Steamship Co.; J. Waller, Keystone Transportation Co.; A. A. Wright, St. Lawrence & Chicago Steam Navigation Co. The President of the Dominion Marine Association is ex officio Chairman of the Canadian Lake Protective Association.

Following is the annual report signed by A. E. Mathews, Chairman of the committee, and Francis King, Counsel for the Association.

In this brief summary of the Association's work during 1915, inasmuch as the chief purpose of the organization is to secure safe navigation and so cut down the losses due to preventable casualties, first place is given to the statement that once more the records show that no vessel enrolled has been lost within the waters over which the Association exercises any supervision. The committee is also pleased to note that the accidents which have occurred, with the exception of a few glaring cases of which special mention will be made, have been for the most part either unavoidable, excusable or of comparatively little moment. It is regrettable that the exceptions referred to mar the record, but even here one finds cause for congratulation in that the serious cases are so few in number and that in the analysis substantial fault is found to be attributable to so few of the master mariners with whom your committee has had to deal. Several lake vessels have been lost in foreign waters during the past season, but it must be noted here that these losses are purely incidental to existing war conditions, and have no bearing upon the records covered by this report, which, as will be again stated in a later paragraph, relate only to casualties occurring within the limits covered by a master's certificate for inland waters.

Weather conditions have on the whole been favorable, except during the late autumn, when heavy gales prevailed. But water has been low and a number of accidents are attributable to this cause. In the St. Lawrence this may have been particularly noticeable and draft permitted has in some cases been restricted to less than the customary canal limit.

An appendix sets out the casualties of the year under the usual headings. Strandings and groundings have again been grouped together according to the method adopted by the committee of 1914, and together they number 28, an increase of 10 over 1914. Under this heading are to be found all the serious casualties reported for the year, excepting one of grave moment which appears in the list of collisions, and one or two fairly serious but not so culpable in connection with locking in the canals. Of these 28 groundings or strandings, one at the opening of navigation in the Kaministikwia River was stated to be due to ice formed on the steamer's bottom during the winter, one was on a submerged obstruction close to a harbor dock, one was

a rubbing contact in the Rapide Plat of the St. Lawrence, one was a similar contact with the Maxwell Shoal in the St. Lawrence marked on the charts as having been removed, several of a similar nature and on account of low water conditions occurred in other narrow channels, five of comparatively slight importance were in the canals or canal approaches, one was a deliberate beaching of the ship at the difficult upper entrance to the Morrisburg Canal for the purpose of avoiding collision with an upbound tug and tow, and one was a deliberate beaching in a gale to avoid foundering when the ship sprang a leak which could not be controlled.

In addition to the above the list of groundings contained one or two cases of varying importance due to fog. The records are faulty in two cases in which the masters, having been summarily dealt with by owners, failed to report to the Association. The default of the master and the owner's action in each case has been noted in the records and may be considered later as occasion arises. A peculiar case that received special consideration and resulted in much correspondence and finally in a vote of censure was a stranding on Blake Point Shoal, Lake Superior, due to Blake Point gas buoy being mistaken for Passage Island Light which was not yet burning at the date of the accident. A stranding on Drummond Island eight miles east of Detour on a course from the Ducks is still under consideration. The remaining cases of special importance were strandings on Niagara Shoal in Lake Ontario, on Gull Island Shoal below Clayton in the St. Lawrence River, on the Olympia Shoal between Kingston and Knapp's Point in the St. Lawrence, and on a shoal adjoining Red Island off the mouth of the Saguenay River. All these four cases were considered quite inexcusable and votes of censure have been recorded against master or pilot. Wreck investigations have been held by the Dominion Wreck Commissioner in two of these cases and his judgments contain severe condemnation of the pilots. In one of the four cases an investigation asked for has only been delayed by the absence of the master, who left the lakes on one of the boats which went into the ocean trade.

The list of collisions, numbering 15 as against 23 in 1914, includes five cases of but slight importance which occurred in making landings at or moving near docks, seven involving comparatively light damage in one or other of the canals when with one unimportant exception steamers enrolled in this Association come in contact with dredges, scows, buoys or other vessels of outside classes, and two more of equally slight importance, one with an anchored schooner improperly lighted and one with a motor launch, in the rivers. In no one of these 14 cases referred to did your committee impute blame to the master, and in accordance with the settled rule in the one case involving two vessels enrolled in the Association consideration was deferred pending negotiation between the owners. The 15th case, however, was no light matter and on the contrary its serious character is a blot on what would have been an exceptionally clean collision record. On July 12, in a dead calm, about six miles off Presqu'île in Lake Huron, the Wahcondah rammed and sank the whaleback Choctaw while going full speed in a dense fog. There seem to have been no redeeming features

in the manoeuvres to avoid the impending collision or in the subsequent efforts to rescue the crew of the Choctaw, all of whom were nevertheless fortunately able to take to their boats and were ultimately picked up by the Wahcondah. The master of the Wahcondah was censured and brought before the Wreck Commissioner, with the result that his certificate was suspended for the remainder of the season.

There are 10 cases of canal damage reported, due to striking walls or gates. In one only were gates broken by a vessel enrolled in the Association. The case well exemplified the risk run through the failure of the canal authorities to equip the gates with safety devices. On May 3 the Rosemount, snubbing in ordinary course and in the usual manner in a lock of the Lachine Canal, touched the headgates by reason of the steel snubbing cable slipping in the steamer's compressor. Forced but a few inches out of mitre, the headgates fell back under the head of water above, and the Rosemount was swept out of the lock, serious damage being only averted by prompt action of the master, who brought the ship up on her anchors. The committee passed this case without censure, but in one other in which the steamer's engines, ordered astern, were put ahead, an engineer was censured. Fortunately in this case no serious damage resulted. The other eight cases were passed, after due consideration of each, making allowances in every case for the peculiar difficulties attendant upon canal navigation and especially for those due to the cross currents developed by waste weirs and power sluices. In none of the 13 cases also reported relating to contact with docks, bridges, and harbors and channel banks was the damage serious and in each of these cases the committee believed the circumstances such that no fault could be attributed to the navigator.

To review, after giving careful consideration to each case as it arose, the committee passed them all except the one collision above particularly mentioned, one striking of lock gates, and eight of the strandings or groundings. Nine votes of censure were recorded, three upon masters engaged as such, four upon masters engaged on lake vessels as pilots or sailing masters, one upon a mate, and one upon an engineer, while in three cases, through the Wreck Commissioner's Court, penalties were also imposed by way of suspension of certificates; in one case that of a master engaged as such, in one case that of a mate, in one case that of a master engaged as sailing master on a lake vessel. One serious stranding is still under consideration.

It devolved upon your committee to deal also with some six or seven reports relating to 1914 casualties which had either been held over during that year pending investigation of circumstances, or were filed after the close of the season too late for consideration and final action. These were in due course considered and all were passed with the exception of one case in which a vote of censure was recorded against the master on account of the absence of a certificated officer from the bridge when the ship grounded while making a bend in the St. Mary's River.

These casualty reports constantly raise questions as to the need of improvement or alteration of conditions with relation to currents, depths, obstructions or aids