Lubrication of Cars.

At a recent meeting of the Central Railway Club the following report on lubrication of freight & passenger equipment was presented:

All boxes on passenger equipment cars should be re-packed at least once a year, the re-packing to commence about May 1 each year, using ½ old & ½ new packing, taking the better portion of the old & turning the balance over to freight car use if considered to be in fair condition. Cars should be suitably marked on the trucks, showing the date re-packed. All passenger equipment cars going through the shops for overhauling should be entirely re-packed, & where wheels & axles are renewed, new brasses should be used. Particular attention should be paid to the condition of the trucks, close attention being given to the equalizing bars & pedestals, also to the renewal of dust guards if defective. Oiling of cars to be done only at ends of road, unless cars are put in train at an intermediate station; no oiling to be done other than the above unless made necessary by reason of hot box or other cause of like nature. All boxes should, however, be opened at main line inspection points & examined as to their condition.

All freight cars should be re-packed whenever stopped for repairs, using the old packing turned over from passenger equipment with the addition of such new packing as may be necessary. Trucks should be put in proper condition, particularly dust guards & oil box covers, also boxes re-packed where wheels & axles have been renewed—new brasses to be used in such cases. Packing that is removed, if in good condition, should be put to soak for at least forty-eight hours, & may then be used again under freight cars. Oiling to be done similar to passenger. Close attention should be given to cars received in interchange, & such quantities of packing used as may be deemed necessary to put car in good condition to run safely over the line. In cases of hot box would suggest the use of saturated waste instead of oil. Great care should be taken in all cases of cars re-packed to see that it is done in a manner to insure the proper lubrication of the journals.

The Committee suggests the use of an oil equal in quality to the Galena car oils; the use of lighter oil in winter than in summer; that all packing be allowed to soak at least 48 hours before using; that all shops & inspection points be instructed as to a uniform manner of packing the boxes; that the use of cooling compounds or patented packing is unnecessary; that boxes be examined at least every 200-miles run; that the use of oil cans by train crews be abolished, crews to be supplied with saturated waste instead.

The Albert Southern Ry., which runs from Alma, on Chignecto Bay, to Derry's Corners, N.B., with a branch of 3 miles to Harvey, is reported in a press despatch to have been sold to the purchasers of the Salisbury & Harvey Ry., referred to on page 346. The A.S. connects with the S. & H. at Albert. The road was opened June 15, 1892, & was sold Dec. 6, 1892, at sheriff's sale, since which it has been operated by W. A. Trueman, as trustee, in the interest of the creditors. For the year ended June 30, 1898, its gross earnings were $3,106.96, & its net earnings $564.36.

Port Arthur, Duluth & Western Ry.—The Master-in-Ordinary at Toronto on Dec. 18 dismissed the motion of D. F. Burk, of Port Arthur, by which he preferred a claim to $155,000 bonds of this Co., which is in liquidation. The judgment was founded on the fact that the ownership of the bonds is now the issue of a suit in the higher court. The bonds are in the possession of the Toronto General Trusts Co., in trust for the estate of the late J. Lee, A. B. Lee, & the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Mr. Burk's claim is on the grounds of money advanced & services rendered.

Superintendent.—"Were the sleeping cars on fire when you passed the wreck?"

Conductor.—"I did not see any sleeping cars, sir. When we got there they were all smoking cars."

SHIPPING MATTERS.

Suspension of Coasting Laws.

So far the formal announcement of the Dominion Government's future policy in regard to the suspension of the coasting laws has not been made, & as a result there is a great deal of uncertainty & anxiety in shipping circles, which the Government should take steps to remove without further delay. In this connection it will be well to bear in mind Sir Wilfrid Laurier's reply to the deputation which waited upon him in Ottawa on Nov. 22, when he practically admitted that a mistake had been made, & that it would not be repeated, & that if the coasting laws were to be again suspended it would only be after parliamentary action. Sir Wilfrid said:—

"The main question, I believe, is to keep our coasting laws for Canada & for Canadian shipping. We are anxious to do that, but it was represented to us that our Canadian upper lake fleet was inadequate for the increased trade, & there appeared to be some reason for so believing. The blue books show that in so far as Ontario is concerned her shipping is declining. Of course, Capt. Gaskin showed that a great deal of the Province's shipping is registered at Montreal. This weakens the statement that the blue books made. Another question is, is the shipping adequate? Can it take all the grain from Fort William in the autumn? It was represented to us that it could not. The Montreal Board of Trade said so two or three years ago, & passed a resolution asking us to allow U.S. ships to load there for export. The Winnipeg Corn Exchange asked the same thing, & we had reason to suppose that they were correct. You say that they were not. One thing that forcibly strikes me is that only one U.S. vessel was chartered, & it inclines me to think that your ideas are largely right. The Government will not lose sight of what Mr. Osler said in opening. If the new system be continued it will be by legislation, & I may say further that unless Parliament amends the coasting laws this Order-in-Council will not be repeated. It was not our intention to make it a permanent part of our policy. We believed that if what we heard was true it would have a stimulating effect on Canadian shipping. We believed that we would either have to build more or let the U.S. shipowners help usin moving our vast crop. We did it most reluctantly, & we believe that this action will convince everybody that we Canadians all want Canadian trade to be carried in Canadian bottoms."

Unless a definite announcement is received from the Government at an early date, the Toronto Board of Trade, which has been especially active in connection with the matter, will do well to press for one, so that vessel owners may know just where they stand. Should an adverse decision be given, steps must be taken to thoroughly arouse the country on the question & to bring it before Parliament next session. The crisis in the shipping industry is such that a committee of the House of Commons, or failing that a committee of the Senate, should be appointed to consider the causes of the decadence & to secure testimony from all parts of the Dominion.

The Marine Review, of Cleveland, Ohio, ventures the opinion that "Canada's coasting regulations will probably hereafter be a dead letter on the lakes during the grain-shipping season, though they will remain on the statute books & be enforced at other times." It is of vital importance that no effort should be spared to prevent the fulfilment of this prediction.

The feeling of shipping men is indicated in a letter from J. H. G. Hagarty, Managing Director of the St. Lawrence & Chicago Steam Navigation Co., who, in referring to a report that the Conners syndicate, which has recently obtained concessions in the Montreal harbor, had secured options upon the Rosedale, Algonquin & other Canadian vessels, says: "To those who are acquainted with the marine business on the lakes, this may seem too absurd to require any reply, but as there are some who may not understand it, I would like to say that, while I know nothing of the Conners syndicate further than that it has not secured options upon the Rosedale or the Algonquin, I presume it is composed of business men, & is not likely to desire to do so. No one in his sane senses would purchase a Canadian steamer at the present time, or until the question of giving the coasting trade away to the Americans is finally settled."

Montreal Elevators & the St. Lawrence Grain Trade.

The most important event of the month in transportation matters has been the agreement entered into between the Montreal Harbor Commissioners & what is known as the Conners syndicate. On Nov. 28 the Commissioners invited proposals to be sent in within two days from people willing to erect grain elevators at Montreal Harbor. W. J. Conners, Buffalo, N.Y.; Hon. R. Harcourt, Treasurer of Ontario; A. Brunet, Montreal, & Elias Rogers, Toronto, put in a definite proposition on Nov. 30. J. R. Booth, of the Canada Atlantic Ry., wrote that it was impossible to prepare a proposition in the short time allowed, that his Co. would require, at least, 1,500 by 100 ft., with additional space for extension, as sites for elevators & warehouse accommodation both in the west & east ends of the harbor, that the probable size of elevator to be erected would be of 1,500,000 bus. capacity. The Prescott Elevator Co., which a year ago offered to erect elevators if the same privileges were given it as asked for by the Conners syndicate, wrote that it had given up the idea when it seemed likely that the Government would furnish the funds to do the work. It considered the time allowed by the Commissioners too short for the matter to be taken into consideration. The Montreal Warehousing Co. wrote asking that nothing be done until it had a chance, H. & A. Allan asked for a lease of one of the new piers for 50 years in consideration of which they would erect an elevator for the common use of all the inland carriers, rates to be subject to the approval of the Harbor Board. The Montreal Transportation Co. wrote that it was ready to furnish the Board with a proposition for the erection of an elevator. The Montreal Terminal Railway Co. requested that the Board would not commit itself until the Co. had an opportunity to make a proposition.

The Commissioners promptly decided to deal with the Conners syndicate, & after a lot of negotiation & a number of meetings, entered into an agreement. The Commissioners' decision met with considerable opposition from a considerable section of the press, from members of the Montreal Corn Exchange & from one of the Commissioners, Jno. Torrance, who dissented from it. A member of the Corn Exchange applied for an injunction to prevent the Commissioners accepting the Conners' offer, but this was refused by the court. The agreement is summarized as follows:

The Commissioners allot to the syndicate for 40 years 1,170 ft. of the lower portion of Windmill Point pier lying between Windmill Point basin or slip, or the canal & canal basin;