

The Minister of Marine on the St. Lawrence Insurance Rates.

Following are extracts from a verbatim report of the speech of Hon. J. D. Hazen, Minister of Marine, at the Canadian Manufacturers Association's annual dinner in Ottawa recently:—

I see that you had before you for consideration a subject of very great importance to the people of Canada as a whole, of special importance to the shipping interests and to those bringing from across the seas goods and raw material for the purpose of selling them in Canada or manufacturing them into goods that will be sold in Canada. I notice that a resolution was brought before you and after some amendment was passed with regard to the rates of insurance that are being paid upon the St. Lawrence route. I don't think I am overstating the case when I say it is the conviction of all who have studied trade conditions so far as they relate to the shipping interests of this country, that Canada is discriminated against by the underwriters so far as the rates of marine insurance upon the St. Lawrence, and in fact in the whole of British North America are concerned. Lloyd's insurance rates on single screw vessels plying to United States ports are from 10 to 11 cents on \$100; and for the same type of steamer using the St. Lawrence route it is 15 cents. On double screw steamboats plying to U.S. ports the rate is 15 cents, and for the same type of vessel on the St. Lawrence route 22½ to 25 cents. It will be admitted, I think, on all sides that that is a very serious handicap to Canadian shipping and to the importers of goods from the British Isles; but there is worse than that, for commencing on Sept. 1 Lloyd's raised the rate on tramp steamers using the St. Lawrence 1% on the cost of the vessel, and for the month of October 2% on the cost of the vessel, the result is a rate is imposed upon tramp steamers coming to the St. Lawrence that is practically prohibitive, and that vessels of that class are kept away from the St. Lawrence, and in the fall an impossible state of affairs occurs, and it is impossible to move from the St. Lawrence the amount of grain that is coming there for shipment or that would come there for shipment if steamers of the tramp class could be got to come to Montreal for the purpose of carrying that grain away. That constitutes a tremendous handicap upon the Canadian trade, it gives that enormous advantage to U.S. ports, and the result of that is that thousands upon thousands of tons of grain that in the natural course of events ought to be shipped out of the St. Lawrence in ships sailing to Montreal or Quebec, are carried down to U.S. ports and shipped on vessels sailing to U.S. ports and the business given to those U.S. ports, and the advantage of that trade is lost to the Dominion. That is a state of affairs that cannot be regarded complaisantly by people endeavoring to build up on this northern part of the continent a great commercial country, that ought to be able to handle through its own ports the products of its own fields and prairies.

The resolution finally adopted at the meeting of the Manufacturers' Association to-day asks the government to cause representations to be made to those who are engaged in underwriting risks upon vessels sailing between Great Britain and Canada, and if those representations are not availing, then asking the government to assist in the carrying out of some plan of insurance that will enable vessels engaged in the Canadian trade to get insurance rates on terms that were more equitable and fair, and that were more in proportion to the rates imposed upon vessels sailing to U.S. ports. Representation of the

character asked have already been made to the underwriters and to Lloyd's in Great Britain. Representations have been made in the past, representations were made during the past summer when a number of the Canadian ministers were in London. Facts and figures have been laid before the underwriters; it has been pointed out that during late years great improvements have been made in the St. Lawrence route; that not many years ago the depth of water in the channel from Montreal down in places did not exceed 10 ft.; to-day from Montreal to the sea we have a channel 30 ft. deep, a channel that is being widened, straightened out and improved every year, and which is now being deepened to 35 ft.; it was pointed out that of late years aids to navigation of the most modern character it is possible to obtain, have been placed along the St. Lawrence; that there is a lighthouse practically on every headland, that on every promontory and point there is something to guide the mariner, and that the channel is well buoyed, and in addition to that submarine bells have been established, and that the most modern and up to date aids to navigation have been established along the St. Lawrence route, and that the government is willing to go on spending money, putting better aids on as the inventive genius of man produces aids that are better than those we have to-day; and there has been an improvement of a very great character indeed in the aids to navigation upon the St. Lawrence, and to-day there is no waterway in the world that is better guarded better protected, better buoyed or lighted than is the St. Lawrence from Montreal to the sea. It has been pointed out to the underwriters that the reductions in insurance rates have not been at all commensurate with the improved conditions that have been brought to pass on the St. Lawrence river, and that today the rates being charged to Canadian ports are out of all reason and all proportion to the rates that are being charged to the U.S. Although all these facts have been laid before the underwriters I regret very much to have to say that I cannot give any reason to hope that the underwriters are prepared to make any reduction in the rates at present time so far as the St. Lawrence route or the ports of Halifax and St. John are concerned. Therefore, I think there is little to be gained or to be hoped for from any further representations that will be made to the underwriters.

The second part of the resolution asks the government to assist in a scheme that may be evolved for the purpose of causing a reduction of those rates, or, as I understand it, of having some scheme of insurance evolved under which owners of vessels coming to Montreal and the St. Lawrence and St. John and Halifax may get their ships insured at a rate that is fairly in reason compared with the rates to vessels going to the U.S. Up to the present no proposition of a feasible character seems to have been made to any government in Canada with regard to the establishment of a Canadian Lloyd's or a marine insurance to be assisted by the government. I read the resolution passed this forenoon not to mean that they expect the government of Canada to undertake the work of insuring ships coming to the St. Lawrence, but as a request on their part that they would be willing to co-operate with vessel owners and others interested in this trade for the purpose of bringing to pass a better condition of affairs than exists today. I have no right to state, without consulting with my colleagues, what the policy of the government may be in that

respect, but I think the practical course to take would be for the shipping interests on the St. Lawrence and for those who are interested in the importation of goods, to formulate some scheme of bringing about a better condition as regards insurance rates, with government aid, and to submit that proposition for the consideration of the government of Canada, and I don't think that the Premier would haul me over the coals at all for making the statement that I believe if they do so their appeal will not fall on unsympathetic ears, and that the government, having regard to the great industrial and commercial interests of this country, will be prepared to assist in a generous manner anything that may be suggested that will bring about what is so much desired by the shipping interests, and which will do so much to build up trade in Montreal and in the ports of the lower provinces as well.—Industrial Canada.

Port Colborne-Dundurn Collision.

The investigation into the collision between the s.s. Port Colborne and the s.s. Dundurn, while going through the draw of St. Dominique bridge in the Soulanges canal, on Sep. 9, whereby damage was done to a bridge and to the Dundurn, was held by Commander H. St. G. Lindsay, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Captains F. Nash and J. McGrath, as assessors. Following is the decision:—

The Port Colborne is a vessel whose size is almost the limit which can navigate the canal. She therefore requires the deepest water, viz., the centre of the canal to navigate in. She was proceeding up the canal and, when within a short distance of the bridge, sighted the Dundurn, which was coming down, and almost at the same time answered the signal made by the Dundurn, of one blast on the whistle, meaning that he was going to pass to port in the usual manner. The Port Colborne was proceeding at about three knots when this signal was made, and expected to pass the draw of the bridge before the other vessel (the Port Colborne having the right of way). As the Port Colborne entered the draw of the bridge her master noticed that the Dundurn was steering in an erratic manner, and coming with considerable speed she struck the Port Colborne with her bow, and the impact of this threw the Dundurn's head towards the bridge, which was open and lying parallel with the south side of the canal, causing her to run into the bridge, damaging both the bridge and herself. The evidence of the Dundurn's master and crew showed that when the Port Colborne's lights were sighted, and the one blast signal was given, the master was unaware of the close proximity of the bridge, owing to the regular bridge lights not being exhibited, and he having allowed his vessel to get too close to the bank increased her speed so as to enable her to answer her helm quickly, and after getting his vessel straightened up and headed for the Port Colborne he noticed that that vessel was sheering slightly towards the south bank, thereby giving him a very small space to pass, and with the idea of avoiding a collision he gave the order for full speed ahead, hoping that he would be able to clear the Port Colborne and avoid running into the bank. At this time he first noticed the bridge, but the speed of his vessel was such that he could not then with safety have reversed his engines and stopped his ship, and the two vessels came together. Just before the impact the captain of the Dundurn reversed his engines and put his helm hard aport, the fact of the engines going astern and the helm hard aport increased