

### Stranding of the s.s. Potomac.

An investigation was held, recently, at Halifax, N.S., into the causes of the stranding of the Anglo-American Oil Co's s.s. Potomac, near Holy Stone rock, south of Sandwich Point, at the entrance to Halifax harbor, Feb. 19. Capt. L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, conducted the enquiry, assisted by Capt. John Fleming and D. C. Stuart, as nautical assessors. The Potomac is 3,868 tons gross, 2,471 tons register. She sailed from Middlesbrough, Eng., Jan. 29, for Galveston, via Norfolk. On the voyage out, boisterous weather with head wind was encountered, and there was considerable fog in the neighborhood of Halifax harbor, where she grounded, remaining fast until Feb. 23.

Following is a summary of the judgment: The court cannot come to any other conclusion than that the master allowed but one thought to occupy his mind, viz., that of bringing his vessel to port as quickly as possible, owing to shortage of fuel, and ignoring prudence, by proceeding without a pilot, on the distance obtained from Chebucto by sound only, and by being too positive of the correctness of a compass which had scarcely been checked during the outward voyage. Being a stranger in the vicinity, he showed lack of judgment in attempting to make a strange port under such adverse conditions as existed. The fact that, through stress of weather, his coal ran short, causes the court to deal leniently with him, by severely censuring him for his temerity and lack of prudence and judgment.

The court's attention was called to the system of having sailing vessels instead of steamboats to convey pilots to and from vessels, and while admitting that criticism is justified, points out that in cases where a vessel chooses to keep going instead of laying to, the adoption of steamboats would be of little use. The evidence does not show that the vessel's officers failed in their duties, and they are exonerated. The logs and deviation book were all kept with a degree of care and precision. The court deprecates the placing of boys, with practically no sea experience, on the lookout, as they are incapable of realizing the importance of their duties, but understanding the difficulties of masters in finding crews, owing to war conditions, refrains from further criticism of the master's actions on this head.

### Certificated Officers on Motor Vessels.

The bill before the House of Commons regarding the necessity of certificated officers for the navigation of vessels driven by internal combustion engines, of which mention was made in our last issue, amends sec. 629 of the Canada Shipping Act, and a new section, 640a is added regarding certificates and classification of engines on such vessels. Sec. 629 provides that no person shall act in the double capacity of engineer and master on any steamboat, and no person shall, except when the boiler is fired from the engine room, act as engineer and fireman on any steamboat having an engine of over 7 n.h.p. and required by law to carry a certificated engineer. This is amended by the addition of a sub-section reading as follows: "Subject to such regulations as may be made by the Minister this section shall not apply to any passenger ship not exceeding 65 ft. reg-

istered length propelled by an internal combustion engine or by a steam engine with a flash boiler, or by electricity."

Sec. 640a, which is added, is as follows: "The Minister may issue certificates authorizing persons found qualified by the Chairman of the Board of Steamboat Inspection to take charge of the machinery of vessels propelled by internal combustion engines only, and may prescribe by regulations, a classification for such certificates, the qualifications necessary for obtaining the several classes respectively, the limits and authority of the power conferred by the several classes of certificates and the fees payable for such certificates, and may also provide for the examination of those desiring to obtain certificates. 2, The provisions of sec. 628 shall apply to the certificates granted under this section."

Sec. 628 provides for the suspension and cancellation of certificates.

### The Quadra-Charmer Collision.

Following is a summary of the judgment on the causes of the collision between the Dominion Government s.s. Quadra and the C.P.R. s.s. Charmer, near the entrance to Nanaimo harbor, B.C., Feb. 26, when the former was sunk. The enquiry was held by Capt. J. D. Macpherson, Wreck Commissioner for British Columbia, assisted by Capt. Ridley and Gardner as nautical assessors. The court decided that the whole blame for the collision was due to E. LeBlanc, master of the Quadra, the mishap taking place in broad daylight with a smooth sea and fine clear weather. The Quadra had the Charmer broad on her own starboard and was therefore the giving way ship, but no action was taken until too attempting to cross the Charmer's bow, late. The master disobeyed article 22 by with the inevitable result. Further, article 25 requires all vessels in narrow channels to keep on their own starboard side of the channel, but the Quadra was so far on the port side that the evidence of her own crew placed her about 40 ft. off the black buoy which marks the port side of the entrance to Nanaimo harbor. Much evidence, most of which was unreliable and conflicting, was given to the effect that the Quadra gave two short blasts of her whistle on seeing the Charmer. Granted that such whistles were given, such a signal was in violation of article 28 which indicates other signals. The one mentioned if given indicated that the Quadra was directing her course to port, which she never did, and had she done so the court's opinion was that such a movement was neither authorized nor required by the regulations under the circumstances existing.

The court decided not to deal with the master's certificate, but severely reprimanded him, being influenced by the facts that there was no loss of life, that although the collision was caused by the most flagrant breaches of the regulations, it was, in the court's opinion, not due to ignorance nor to carelessness, but rather to the stupid assumption which is far too prevalent in British Columbia, that by being the first to blow a signal whistle gives that vessel the right to choose on which side she will pass an approaching vessel; and that the loss of his vessel as affecting his previous excellent record is in itself a severe punishment. In reprimanding him, the court warned him as well as others handling vessels in British Columbia waters, that until any duly authorized rules appear, the present international rules must be implicitly

obeyed and that in future any breach of them will be severely dealt with. No blame was attached to any other members of the Quadra's crew. Regarding the Charmer, the court found it difficult to see how any blame could be imputed to its officers or crew. It was the duty of the Charmer's master to carry out the one rule which applied to him under the conditions then existing, viz., to keep her course and speed. This he undoubtedly did, and furthermore when he found that a collision was unavoidable, he took the best action possible to avert it. The master of the Charmer, C. Campbell, and the officers and crew were therefore absolved from all blame for the casualty. Capt. Gardner dissented from the judgment as given, giving as his reasons that the Charmer had left her berth on the outward trip at full speed, which is dangerous and should be condemned; that there was some excitement on board the Charmer, caused by nearly swamping a motor launch in passing her in contravention of the regulations governing such cases, this excitement causing a lack of proper vigilance and causing the approach and the signals of the Quadra to be overlooked; that the signals of the Quadra were properly given, and while they are not international signals are the outcome of a custom and long usage and recognized by local masters. He also stated that the master of the Quadra could not be absolved for being on the wrong side of the channel, by being there he was contributing to the initial cause of the accident and merited the censure which a departure from the rules deserves. It was announced after the judgment had been delivered, that the master of the Quadra would appeal to the Minister of Marine against the judgment, as in his counsel's opinion the finding was opposed to the trend of the evidence.

### Licensing of Canadian Vessels for Foreign Business.

Following on the British regulations of Nov. 10, 1915, prohibiting British vessels of 500 tons and upward from engaging on voyages to foreign ports without licenses, the Dominion Government has issued instructions on similar lines, as follows: All Canadian registered vessels whose gross tonnage exceeds 500 tons, are from Apr. 1, prohibited from proceeding on any voyages, excepting those from a port in Canada to another port in Canada, or from a port in Canada to a port in the United States, and vice versa, unless a license to do so has been granted to, or in favor of, the owners or charterers of such steamships. The Minister of Marine is authorized to appoint a committee with power to grant the licenses required, which may be general in reference to classes of ships or their voyages, or special. The Minister is authorized from time to time, to add to the committee and to substitute as members, others, to replace such as may die, resign or become incapable of acting. It is also ordered that all steamships failing or refusing to obtain a license as provided, shall be subject to forfeiture.

**Tonnage on Canadian Register.**—The Minister of Marine in replying to a question in the House of Commons recently, stated that the tonnage on the Canadian register for the decennial periods from 1875, was as follows: 1875, 1,205,565; 1885, 1,231,856; 1895, 825,776; 1905, 669,825; 1915, 929,891.