

to vessels trading on the Lakes; but no action has been taken thereon as yet. This department, however, has been in communication with Mr. Merritt on the subject, with the view of ascertaining what description of tax would be most agreeable to the interests concerned. It is supposed that the sum of \$4,000 per annum will be sufficient to maintain such a hospital. The tax, therefore, on each vessel will be very small, if such a measure is adopted by the government and legislature. In British Columbia there is no tax levied on shipping trading to that Province at present; but, by the terms of the agreement under which the Colony agreed to enter the confederation, it was provided that a Marine Hospital should be built by the Dominion Government, and a suitable sum (probably \$20,000) will be inserted in the estimates to be submitted to Parliament at its next session, for the purpose of constructing the building alluded to. Arrangements will also be made for extending to British Columbia the operation of the laws at present in force in Canada relating to the care of sick and distressed seamen, and for the imposition of the tonnage duty in force in Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

STEAMBOAT INSPECTION.

Under the law for the inspection of steamboats in the Dominion, all steamers registered in Canada must be annually inspected, if they are running or navigating in the waters of Canada. This duty is performed by inspectors appointed by the Government, who are skilled persons, competent to inspect steamboats, their machinery, and boilers. These inspectors form a board, with one of their number as chairman, and meet occasionally at different parts of the Dominion for the purpose of examining engineers of steamboats, and granting them licenses, and such other purposes as may be necessary under the act. Any regulations made by them must be approved by the Governor in Council. The board have the power to revoke the license of an engineer upon proof of negligence, unskilfulness, or drunkenness, or upon the finding of a coroner's inquest. They can also revoke an engineer's certificate for any other cause, but not until the Minister of Marine and Fisheries has certified that such cause is deemed sufficient by him.

The supervision of the board and all subjects connected with the inspection of steamboats, is entrusted to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, to whom the chairman is required to make an annual report of the proceedings of the board, and a return of all steamboats inspected, and penalties collected under the Act.

In order to defray the expenses of the board and the salaries of the steamboat inspectors, a small fee is charged by the government for the inspection of steamboats and the examination of engineers of steamers, which fees are paid over to the Receiver-General, and form the "Steamboat Inspection Fund." No money is expended out of this fund, however, until it has been voted by Parliament in the usual way.

The chairman receives an annual salary of \$1,400, but he performs the duty of an inspector of the largest district in the Dominion, as well as that of chairman of the board, which involves much correspondence and other onerous duties. The inspector of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia receives a salary of \$1,000 per annum, and the other