

The Interstate Commerce Commission's Interference With Lake Traffic.

The Northwestern Miller, of Minneapolis, Minn., the leading milling publication in the United States, says in a recent issue:—

"The Lehigh Valley Rd. has petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for a rehearing on its application to be allowed to continue its lake service, which, in common with that of other railways operating lines on the lakes, was ordered stopped because the commission held that such service violated the terms of the Panama Canal Act. This act, commonly supposed to apply specifically to lines operating through the Panama Canal, was given general application by the simple inclusion of two words, 'and elsewhere,' thus bringing under its provisions the Great Lakes, according to the ruling of the Interstate Commerce Commission, a result no doubt never contemplated by the majority of those who voted for the measure in Congress, believing it to be intended only for regulating traffic through the canal.

"Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Interstate Commerce Commission promulgated a ruling which is one of the most preposterously destructive acts ever perpetrated by this body, totally disrupting, and destroying an established system of lake transportation, which has been of incalculable benefit to the western shipper and receiver, in the hope of encouraging an imaginary system of so-called 'independent' transportation, which, by a disjointed and disconnected service, is to accomplish what the commission considers 'competition,' but which actually would be a state of irresponsible chaos. Thereby it is the desire of the commission to turn backward the wheels of progress and revert to a system of transportation which was out of date a quarter of a century ago.

"In its interpretation of the meaning of the act, the commission is doubtless sincere, believing that in some mysterious way an independent system will come into being which shall give shippers the benefit of a competition which they do not at present have, and cannot under existing conditions obtain. The commission has been led into this belief by the persistent outcry of the paid agitators employed by certain associations and trade organizations. For some time actual shippers have been aware that, on the whole, the work of these agitators has been mischievous and even dangerous, but they are powerless to restrain them; the machinery for their employment having been put in operation, no way is provided either for detecting them wisely or suppressing them altogether. At first, no doubt, these hired 'experts' accomplished some good, and fully earned half their salaries. There were real grievances and discriminations, and these were rectified. But, by the same token, as each town had its own 'expert,' each plugging and pulling for his own community, their efforts practically offset each other; no city secured a permanent advantage in rates over the other, and the gain of one was nullified by the gain of the other.

"When all the obvious and real inequalities were settled, the 'expert' found himself in a perilous position. It was still incumbent upon him to 'make good' or lose his place. He then developed into the local oracle on freights, the man who had a grievance, the walking delegate who was the retained and paid foe of the carrier, the confirmed trouble breeder whose glib tongue was always heard telling about the iniquities of the existing transportation system; the advocate of the new, the untried, the irre-

sponsible and the theoretical; the first to appear before committees and commissions, urging the interests of those he represented, an agitator paid to be a thorn in the flesh, under the theory that nothing is gained except by constant complaint and eternal protest.

"The civic organizations that support and keep in motion these 'experts' rarely represent the real shippers either by their membership or their published sentiments. Mostly they are composed of real estate operators, local bankers, retailers, and a vast conglomeration of clerks, salesmen and subordinates, who like to imagine themselves representative citizens. Shippers who have a large and comprehensive view of traffic matters have long since withdrawn their support. They now wish they had never mistakenly set in motion the mischievous machinery they no longer control.

"Such influences as these, which really signify nothing but a distorted sense of local patriotism, are responsible for the hue and cry raised against the railway controlled lake lines which are now threatened with extinction. To these the Interstate Commerce Commission has evidently listened, not wisely but too well. If its ruling is not reversed, the western shipper and receiver, now so dependent upon lake transportation, will find themselves facing a situation nothing short of calamitous in the very near future. For this they may thank the walking delegates of their local trade unions, whether or not they themselves are members in good standing."

Alleged Shortage of Tonnage for Canadian Meat.—In response to questions in the British House of Commons, Nov. 11, regarding a statement that Canadian meats could not be shipped owing to a shortage of refrigerator vessels in the Canadian trade, the President of the Board of Trade stated that several cargoes of meat had been purchased in Canada, and he was in communication with the Government regarding further purchases, and that only insulated spaces on British vessels usually trading to Australia, New Zealand and the River Plate had been requisitioned.

The Loss of the s.s. Capilano.

Judgment in the enquiry into the causes of the foundering of the Union Steamship Co.'s s.s. Capilano off Texada Island, Oct. 1, was delivered at Victoria, B.C., Nov. 4, by Cap. J. D. Macpherson, acting Wreck Commissioner, as follows:—"The court, having carefully studied the evidence adduced, is unanimous in its decision that the loss by foundering of the s.s. Capilano in the early hours of Oct. 1, was directly due to her having struck some submerged obstruction about 9.25 on the night previous. The evidence, which, with a few exceptions, was singularly straightforward, clearly points to the fact that in striking the submerged obstruction she received serious but hidden damage, which, though unseen and undiscovered, was, nevertheless, strongly suspected by the master and most of the crew. The rather unusual examinations held and precautions taken after the impact, and continued throughout the night until almost the time the ship was abandoned, go to prove the last statement. The opinion of most of the witnesses examined was that the vessel had struck a submerged log or logs. Whatever she struck can never be proved, owing to the total loss of the ship in comparatively deep water and the impossibility of being able to examine the nature of the damage sustained. Taking into consideration, however, that the night was very dark and the atmosphere thick with smoke, and the probability that owing to these conditions the vessel, when rounding Scotch Fir Point, was farther off than was estimated, thus bringing her nearer to the Texada Island shore on her next course, and the very significant fact that the master, who had been lying down in his cabin since about 8 p.m., when awakened by the sound of the whistle being blown, went into the wheel house and immediately said, 'We are too close in. Haul her to the westward. Port,' and it was while executing this manoeuvre and under port helm that the vessel struck, the court is of the opinion that the Capilano was too close to the Texada Island shore, and that the submerged obstruction that she struck was not a log or logs, but a rock.

"Owing to there being an element of doubt, however slight, as to what the submerged obstruction was, the court is of the opinion that the master, Samuel Nelson, is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, and as he has hitherto held a blameless record and

Sault Ste. Marie Canals Traffic.

The following commerce passed through the Sault Ste. Marie Canals during October.

ARTICLES		CANADIAN CANAL	U. S. CANAL	TOTAL
Copper.....	Eastbound	Short tons 6,752	15,526	22,278
Grain.....	"	Bushels 3,848,973	5,841,877	9,690,850
Building stone.....	"	Short tons		
Flour.....	"	Barrels 638,630	934,330	1,572,960
Iron ore.....	"	Short tons 1,405,762	5,470,808	6,876,570
Pig iron.....	"	" 2,070	6,656	8,726
Lumber.....	"	" 4,716	58,568	63,284
Wheat.....	"	Bushels 17,603,834	47,783,522	65,387,356
General merchandise.....	"	Short tons 16,207	40,259	56,466
Passengers.....	"	Number 452	85	537
Coal, hard.....	Westbound	Short tons	260,188	260,188
Coal, soft.....	"	" 105,693	1,537,590	1,643,283
Flour.....	"	Barrels		
Grain.....	"	Bushels 373		373
Manufactured iron.....	"	Short tons 4,726	19,652	24,378
Iron ore.....	"	"	1,500	1,500
Salt.....	"	Barrels 8,540	113,876	122,416
General merchandise.....	"	Short tons 46,853	163,905	210,758
Passengers.....	"	Number 313	59	372
Summary.				
Vessel passages.....	Number	810	2,421	3,231
Registered tonnage.....	Net	1,977,901	7,305,359	9,283,260
Freight—Eastbound.....	Short tons	2,107,436	7,292,000	9,399,436
—Westbound.....	"	158,498	1,999,917	2,158,415
Total freight.....	"	2,265,934	9,291,917	11,557,851