Dominion Government Steamship Service between Pacific and Atlantic Coasts.

Announcement has been made by the Minister of Customs that the Dominion Government will inaugurate a steamship service between Pacific and Atlantic coast ports in Canada, via the Panama Canal, and that contracts have been authorized for the construction of two steamships, tenders for which will be called for shortly by the Department of Railways and Canals. It has been found impossible to charter suitable vessels for the purpose, and so the decision was reached to have them built, and it is said that they will be built in British Columbia. One of the chief difficulties in connection with such construction appears to be the labor shortage, but it is stated that men will be obtained from Europe, and mostly from shipbuilding yards in Scotland, but owing to the condition of affairs in Great Britain, it is not to be taken as certain that men will be obtained from Scotch yards. The establishment of this service will give an opening for the shipment of grain from Vancouver, where the Dominion Government has erected a large grain elevator. It was also reported recently the C.P.R. was contemplating the erection of a large grain elevator at Vancouver, but it is not likely that this will be done, at any rate, not in the immediate future. It is claimed that manufacturing concerns in Ontario and Quebec will be greatly assisted by the service in having the choice of a rail or water route.

Stranding of the s.s. Hungerford.

At the recent enquiry into the causes of the stranding of the British s.s. Hungerford, off Champlain, in the St. Lawrence River, Nov. 19, 1916, held by Capt. L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Capts. F. Nash and C. Lapierre, as nautical assessors, judgment was rendered as follows,-The court having carefully considered the evidence, finds that some serious contradictory statements were made with regard to weather conditions, and the wheelsman's evidence in reference to an order given by the pilot, J. M. Labranche, would tend to throw a different light on the pilot's action if the court entertained the evidence seriously. By examination of the engineer's log it is noticed that various orders with respect to speed were given from the bridge, which prevented accurate estimation of distances, and the passing flurries of grow, and the smoke, made ing flurries of snow, and the smoke, made the pilot's task more difficult. Yet the which is fortunately of no gravity, could have been prevented had there been a guide for the wheelsman to steer by. The suide for the wheelsman to steer by. The extinguishing of lights in the compass binnacle may facilitate the work of the pilot, providing there are objects visible by which the vessel may be steered, but it is an impossibility to keep a vessel on any given course without some leading objects in view hence the need of a comobjects in view, hence the need of a compass as a guide when fog, mist or smoke overtakes a vessel. In this case, neither pilot nor wheelsman had any knowledge of the direction of the vessel's heading during these snow flurries. In view of the fact that the Champlain lights were seen also and have 170, shortly before the stranding, the court cannot overlook the casualty, but the circumstances attending it are such that it will be treated as a property of the court cannot overlook the casualty. as a minor offence. The court condemns

the pilot to pay the cost of the investigation and warns him to be more cautious. The third officer's evidence shows that he reported to the master, R. A. Seabrook, in his room. The court has always maintained that in narrow stretches, and in uncertain or foggy weather, the master should be at his post on the bridge, notwithstanding the presence of the pilot, and he is censured for failing to meet the obligations of his position.

Some suggestions were made to the court with regard to placing a gas buoy where this casualty occurred, and it is said that an application was made last winter with that object in view. court is not, at this stage, willing to admit the necessity of another buoy, but suggests that the one now in position be shifted to where the spar buoy 15C is at present, as it is a point of the bank advancing towards the channel and more prominent, and being at a turn, the placing of buoy 17C at that spot, or in that locality, would be more effective. garding the smoke which the pulp mills emit in the vicinity of Three Rivers, and of which other pilots have complained, the court thinks that, in the interests of navigation, all industries placed on the banks of the St. Lawrence should have their boilers fitted with smoke consumers. There are enough fogs and mists and other elements making navigation hazardous at times, without having to submit to avoidable conditions.

Stranding of the s.s. Haulwen.

An investigation into the cause of the stranding of the British s.s. Haulwen, on Aug. 12, 1916, near Point Citrouille, in the River St. Lawrence, was held recently before Capt. L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, with Capts. F. Nash and C. Lapierre as nautical assessors. Following is a summary of the judgment,—This case resolves itself into the uncorroborated evidence of the pilot, F. X. Minard, the master and wheelsman on the vessel at the time of the casualty having been replaced, and a new crew, new logs, etc., having been installed on board. The chief officer and chief engineer are the only two members of the crew at the time of the accident. Purely

on the evidence of the pilot, the court finds that he committed an error of judgment, due to lack of forethought. It was purely a question of seamanship, with which every pilot is expected to be acquainted, the error of judgment concerning the manoeuvering of the vessel in bringing the vessel to anchor. As the accident happened in August, and on account of the absence of the principal witnesses, the court is inclined to view the matter leniently, and fines the pilot \$50 and condemns him to pay the costs of the investigation, and warns him that as this is his second offence, should he appear again, his license will be jeopardized.

Damage by s.s. Twickenham at Sydney, N.S.

The Dominion Wreck Commissioner, Capt. L. A. Demers, assisted by Capts. A. L. Mulcahy and Jas. Hayes, as nautical assessors, enquired recently into the causes of the damage to the Dominion Coat Co.'s chutes at Sydney, N.S., on Oct. 11, and gave the following judgment. No evidence beyond that of the master, R. Craggs, was taken. This was straightforward and to the point, and in acknowledging his failure to assume the responsibility which devolved on him, he simplified the enquiry. The court finds that the master should have issued order to unmoor his vessel, and when once clear from the wharf, handed over the responsibilities of navigating to the the pilot. It must not be lost sight of that the pilot is the adviser of the master as to local conditions, and the master himself is solely responsible for the property committed to his care. Mooring and unmooring a vessel are duties pertaining to seamanship and are not altogether within the scope of a pilot's duty, and hence the court must find the master in default, but in doing so, wishes to emphasize the fact that the action of the master in not foreseeing the effect of hauling the vessel stem first, in the face of a strong wind pressing the vessel against the wharf, is but an error of judgment, and he is therefore cautioned to be more careful in future, and reminded that he is at all times the responsible party.

Sault Ste. Marie Canals Traffic.

The following commerce passed through the Sault Ste. Marie Canals during November, 1916.

| ARTICLES | Maria Maria | CANADIAN CANAL | U. S. CANAL | TOTAL |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Copper Eastbound Grain | Short tons | 6,920,445 | 21,281 8,320,376 | 21,281 15,240,821 |
| Building stone | Short tonsShort tonsShort tons | 430,580 676,168 | 1,162,791 5,218,677 | 1,539,371 5,894,845 |
| Pig iron Lumber Wheat General merchandise Passengers | M. ft, b.m. Bushels Short tons Number | 9,381,400 1,152 337 | 36,938 19,138,892 37,546 27 | 36,990 28,520,292 38,698 364 |
| Coal, hard | Short tonsBarrelsBushels | 6,900 64,016 | 181,170 957,044 60 2,550 | 188,070 1,021,060 60 2,550 |
| Manufactured iron | Short tonsShort tonsBarrelsShort tonsNumber | 8,400 44,845 56 | 21,830 12,710 104,568 6 | 26,552 21,110 149,413 62 |
| Vessel passages | | 627 990,145 | 1,920 5,934,765 | 2,547 6,924,910 |
| Freight—Eastbound | | 1,137,370 121,683 7,259,053 | 6,225,714 1,266,568 10,492,282 | 7,363,084 1,388,251 8,751,335 |