

THE PILOTS OF THE PORT

An Account of Their Work—
How a Big Ship is Picked Up
in the Straits.

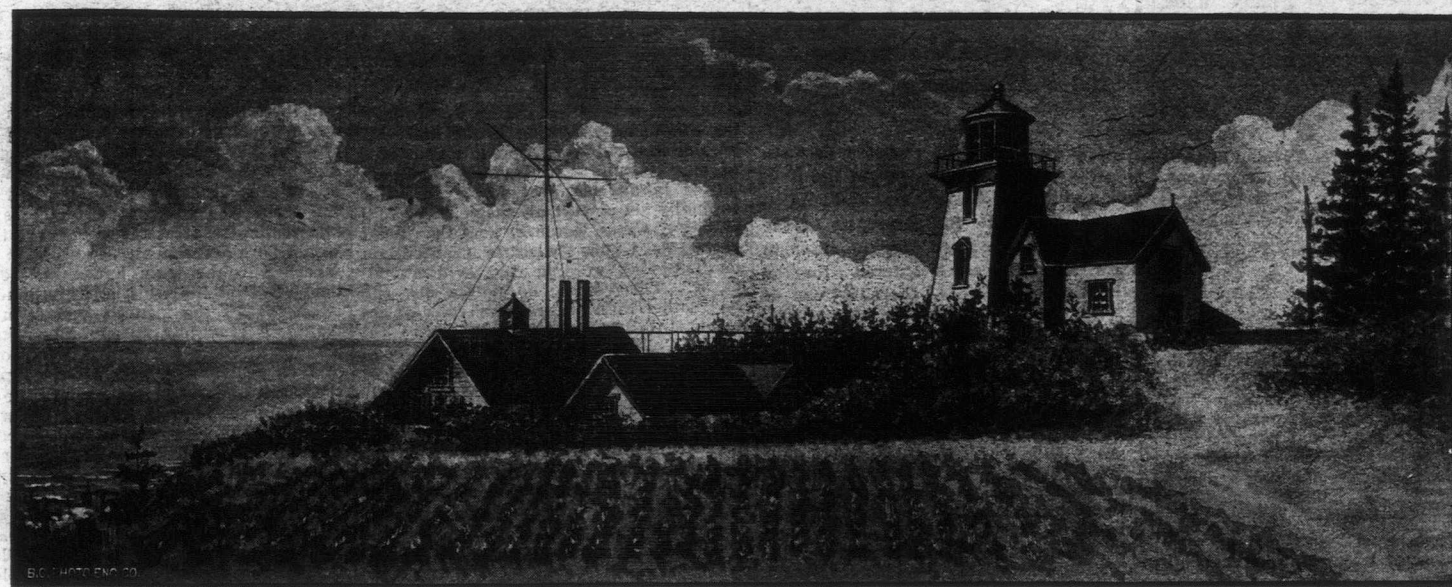
A big liner, after having crossed a vast watery expanse, and braved every force a pilot's storm could hurl against her, is nearing her destination. She is creeping along slowly but steadily in spite of the fury of the seas, which seem to be in the heavens where the huge banks of clouds, chasing one another through the illimitable space, present a spectacle of awe-inspiring activity. Away in the distance can be seen the lights of the city, like so many illuminated pin heads; but between them and the launch vessel there toss miles of billowing seas, and the stout-hearted master knows full well that he has not left danger in his wake, that many a noble ship has gone to her doom within easy reach of safety; and so he proceeds cautiously.

But he is not looking for the blinking lights of the city, nor the twinkling lamps in the heavens, nor the ports of a passing vessel. His eyes are searching the black, mysterious void about him for a tiny signal which he knows is tumbling about on the element on which he rides. Ahead of him and on either side he scans every yard of the distance until suddenly his face lights up and an expression of satisfaction escapes him—for his quest is ended.

Rising and falling, now riding on the crest of a wave, then disappearing in a valley, is a faint light, so faint indeed, that only a practiced eye can discern it. Slowly it grows brighter, until it becomes visible to passengers as well as seamen, and finally it is right alongside. Swishing through the air goes a rope from the

Carmanah Lighthouse

It was off this point, situated at the entrance to the Straits of Juan de Fuca, that the pilots formerly used to await the arrival of ships, and struggle for the task and emoluments of bringing them to port.

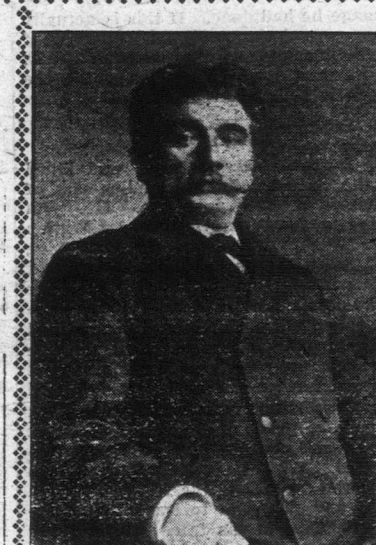


and valuable cargo, as though she was aware that on the bridge stands one who has sounded all the depths and shoals, and who will guide her safely to port. And so she heads fearlessly through the gloom, past reef and rock, until she reaches the spot where her headlines shoot through the air and the responsibility of those to whom is entrusted the guardianship of a priceless freight is ended.

Seamanship companies, and shipping men who know, say that Victoria is one of the best pilotage ports on the continent; that it has a staff of the most efficient pilots; that its rates are among the most reasonable; and that its record is unmarred by calamitous marine occurrences under the presidency of any of the district pilots. It is true that there have been disasters in the Straits of Juan de Fuca, events of a comparatively recent date, but in none of these has a licensed pilot for the district figured. Every big trans-Pacific liner that touches at Victoria takes on a pilot, which includes the C. P. R. steamers, those of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, the China Mutual Company, and the large tonnage craft of other companies. The immunity from serious accidents which these vessels have enjoyed in the Straits is not due to the placidity of the waters, because experienced men describe them as being as dangerous as any on the coast. The reason, it is true, sustained an accident which laid her up for quite a time some months ago, but she had no pilot aboard when it happened.

The limits for speaking vessels bound into Victoria or Esquimalt harbors are at or outside a line drawn from Williams Head to Trial Island. The port limits are as follows: Inside a line drawn from Clover Point to Butcher's Ledge, and a line drawn from Butcher's Ledge to Piggyback Lighthouse, outside Scroggs Rocks and Brothers Island. Seafolk indeed does a big ship get past the speaking limit line without being accosted, and should she do so the pilot board would require explanations from the members of the staff on duty at the time.

This district—Victoria and Esquimalt—has five licensed pilots. They are Capt. Thompson, Buckman, Robinson, Nemby and William Cox. In a way they should be considered as forming a company, as



CAPT. THOMPSON.
One of the Veteran Pilots
of Victoria.

their earnings for the month are pooled, and all draw equal shares. They alternate in the various phases of their work, that is, two are on the Straits in their sloop Helen or launch Coby, two remain on shore ready for duty, and one holds himself for emergencies. There is a system governing the pilotage nowadays which presents a striking contrast to the conditions in the good old days of competition, when it was every man for himself. Then the pilots would run down the Straits as far as the Cape, braving all sorts of dangers in the race for vessels, and ready to resort to an infinite variety of expedients to outwit a rival.

Pilots receive licenses under the following conditions: They must make application to the pilot board of their district and enclose the following certificates: From masters of vessels in which they have served, as to ability as seamen; from the board of trade or local marine

board as master or mate; statement of services from time of first going to sea up to date; certificate from last employer. Applicants must be British subjects of not less than twenty-five years of age, must have resided not less than two years in the province, and must be of good moral character and temperate habits. Should the requirements of the first condition above mentioned prove satisfactory to the pilotage board the applicant will be examined on his practical knowledge of the management of vessels and steamers under all circumstances of wind and weather, but particularly as to his knowledge of the navigation and pilotage of the district.

If the candidate qualifies under these conditions he is accepted as pilot on probation for six months, and if at the end of that time his conduct proves satisfactory his license will be confirmed on payment of the license fee of twenty-five dollars. It will be apparent from this that the aspirant for office on the mighty deep has quite a climb ahead of him when he starts his marine career. None of these conditions is relaxed, as their maintenance in full force is necessary to preserve an efficient staff of pilots.

These men are responsible to what is known as the pilotage board, a body of commissioners appointed by the Dominion government to carry out the "Act Respecting Pilotage." The present board consists of five members, as follows: J. G. Cox, chairman; Wm. Grant, A. B. Fraser, Jr., Joshua Kingham, and E. Crow Baker, secretary.

In a word the duty of this body is to exercise executive control over pilotage matters for the district. They are to see that the act and the by-laws based on the act are carried into effect, and it is "up to them" to keep the pilot staff in an efficient state. They have almost unlimited power, fixing the rates to be collected, and as before stated, exercising complete jurisdiction over all details in pilotage for the district for which they are appointed, namely, Victoria and Esquimalt.

This is what is known as a compulsory pilotage port. With the exception of vessels engaged in coastwise trade all craft entering Victoria or Esquimalt must either accept the services of a pilot or pay what is known as half pilotage, without one. This means that if a master prefers to run his steamer to port without the assistance of a pilot he will have to contribute a half rate. But vessels coming to the Royal Roads seeking cargoes or in distress are exempt from all charges. The object of this exemption in the former instance is to encourage shipping in this direction, while in the latter case it is manifest. The system of charges enforced in this district is most reasonable and equitable. The rates of pilotage for vessels entering or clearing from Victoria harbor are as follows:

Sailing vessels under sail, \$3 per foot depth; sailing vessels under steam, \$2; steamers, \$1.50.

Esquimalt harbor: Vessels under sail, \$2 per foot depth; vessels under steam or in tow, \$2; steamers, \$1.50.

Vessels proceeding from Victoria to Esquimalt and vice versa, and having discharged or received a portion of their cargo in either harbor, and having paid full pilotage into either harbor, in proceeding with the assistance of steam shall pay \$1.50 per foot. Of course there are modifications in rates such as those applying to ocean steamships carrying mails, freight or passengers, but the tariff given above is generally enforced. Pilotage dues are paid to the order of the pilotage board by the masters of vessels or in their default by the agents or consignees. The secretary keeps track of these and pays to each pilot his share of the earnings less ten per cent. for expenses at the end of each month.

When accidents occur to vessels in charge of a pilot the latter must be in writing to the board. Should he fail to do so he is liable to a fine not exceeding forty dollars. A pilot may be deprived of his license for any of the following causes:

(a) For neglecting for twenty days after the receipt of any money under or

by virtue of the by-laws to pay them over to the pilotage board.

(b) For rendering a false account to the pilotage board for pilotage received or earned.

(c) For intoxication, whether the same shall occur while in charge of a vessel, when required for duty, or for habitual drunkenness.

(d) For incapacity through mental or

gulf pilotage. Vancouver pilots can bring vessels across the gulf as far as the Victoria pilot limits, or may take vessels from the local limits to Vancouver, but the local pilots are not permitted to include the gulf in their scope of operations. The gulf is in neither one district nor the other, and the arrangement is certainly very much one-sided. The Victoria pilots would be satisfied if an understanding was arrived at by which they could take vessels to the Vancouver limits and the Mainland pilots bring them to the local limits. Probably the local board does not desire to involve any danger of the staff being rendered insufficient by frequent trips away from the home port. Most of the United States steamship lines have their own pilots, who come here and await the arrival of the steamers bound down the Sound. Their duties commence immediately the vessels get outside the local limits.

There are several veterans on the district staff, men who piloted in the strenuous days of competitive pilotage. But Capt. Thompson is the doyen, the veteran of veterans. About twenty-four years ago he formed an international company of pilots, there being in the organization Capt. Delgadinos, of Port Townsend, Capt. Oliver, of Port Townsend, and Capt. Thomson of the same port. The latter was washed overboard and lost one night off the Cape. In addition to these there were Capt. King and Capt. Thompson, representing British Columbia. But the laws of Washington territory forced the company to disband. Capt. Thompson then purchased the Victoria pilot sloop Tibbels, a craft of six tons. Those were lively times in the pilot's life. When a steamer or ship hove in sight, night or day,



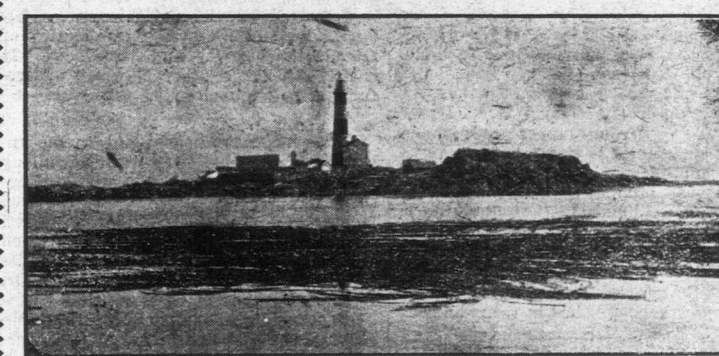
THE KEEPER'S CHILDREN.
The Sturdy Offspring of the Lighthouse Tender at Race Rocks.

bodily infirmity or lack of practical knowledge and ability in putting into effect the theoretical knowledge apparently possessed at time of examination.

The local pilots have two craft in which they ply their calling. One is a sloop, the Helen, which is used in rough weather, and the other a comfortable steam launch, the Coby, in which they go out when the sea is calm. There are three methods of speaking a liner. One is by voice if the ship is near enough and the elements are not howling in opposition; by signalling with pilot flags and by a flare at night. It is no picnic this boarding a liner. A rope is thrown from the big vessel to the frail pilot craft and the pilot clambers to the deck on a ladder. Sometimes he

"blow high, blow low," there were some great manoeuvres and daring operations in the race for the prize. In later years Capt. Thompson has been honored by the pilot board, having been detailed to bring to port the Empress of India, Capt. Marshall, the first of the stately white liners to cross the Pacific. He also brought the first Empress to dock at the outer wharf, the Empress of Japan, and he was the Victoria pilot aboard the Empress of India when she called to place their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York and suite. This honor was conferred on him because of his seniority.

Capt. Thompson has in his possession two documents, a license for the pilotage district of British Columbia, dated 1879,



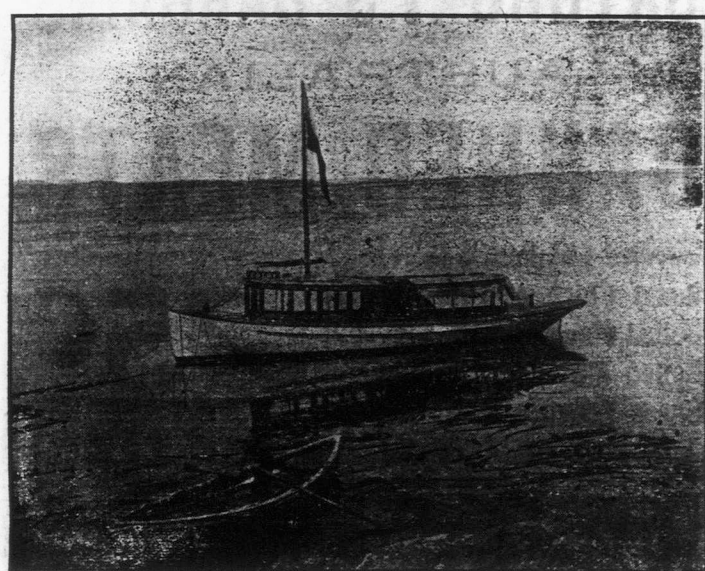
RACE ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE.
Where the Pilots Often Pick Up Their Ships.

misses the rope and his boat drops a considerable distance astern. The larger vessel will have to wait until he comes up again, and if the sea is very heavy he runs a risk of missing his object several times. It is also a difficult matter to descend to the pilot craft when the sea is boisterous. Two of the local pilots were unable to make the necessary connection on one occasion and were carried to Port Townsend.

There is a feature in connection with the pilotage system in these waters, or rather the waters contiguous to the district, which strikes one somewhat inequitable. This is what is known as the

and another for the district of Victoria and Esquimalt, dated 1884. The former license covered the entire province, but when the Victoria and Esquimalt district was instituted another form was issued.

EYES AND NOSE RAN WATER.—C. G. Archer, of Brewer, Maine, says: "I have had Catarrh for several years. Water would run from my eyes and nose for days at a time. About four months ago I was induced to try Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder, and since using the wonderful remedy I have not had an attack. It relieves in ten minutes." 50 cents.—17

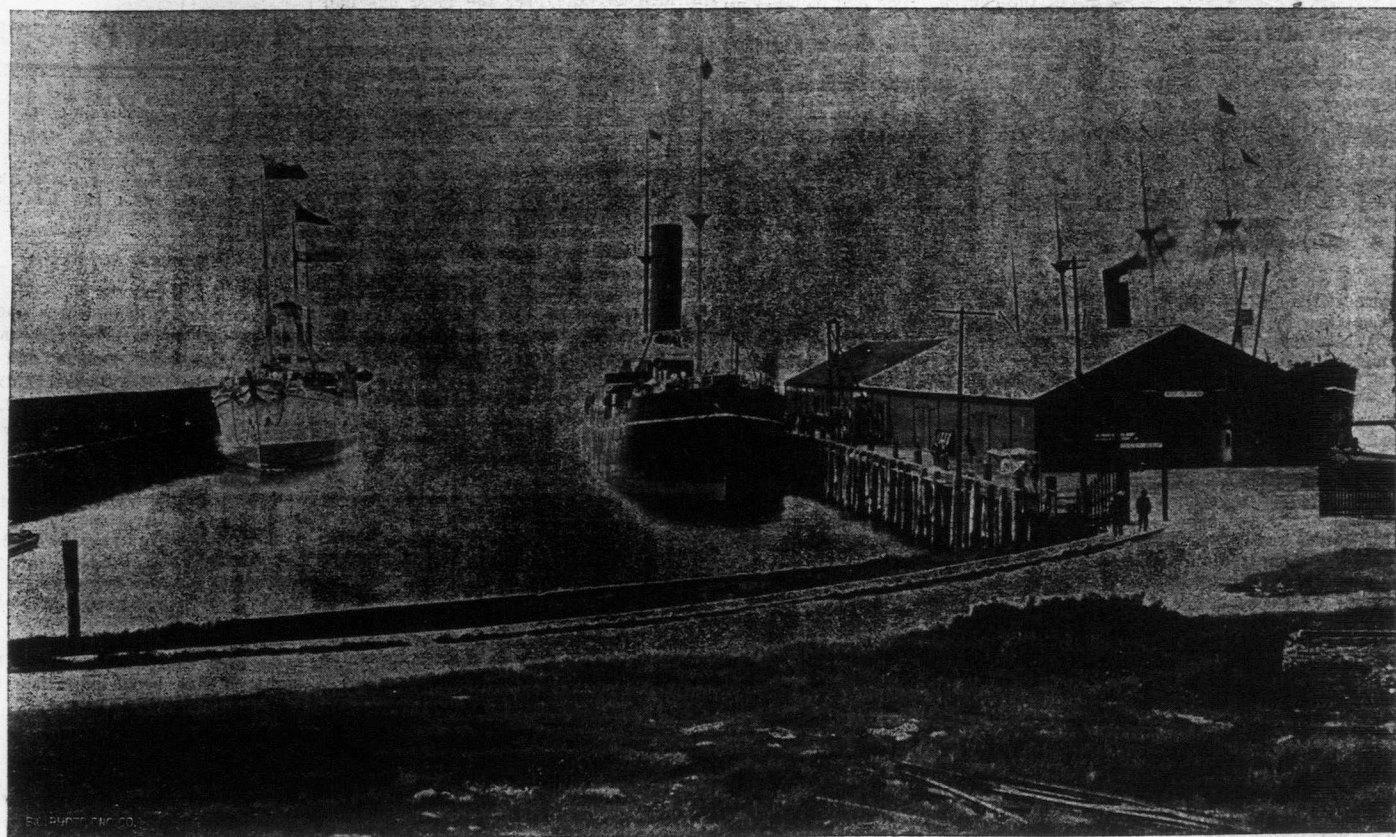


LAUNCH COBY.
The Pilots' Craft for Reaching Ships.

liner and a minute or two later the captain gladly welcomes on deck his latest and last passenger, the man he has been looking for, the man he urgently wants—the pilot.

Now everything goes on bravely. From stem to stern the vessel feels the force of a new personality; she ploughs along as though she was freighted down with confidence instead of precious passengers

How often does the pilot enter into the consideration of those who follow the men that ply their calling on the sea? It is the master of the vessel, the courageous, careful man in uniform, who is in the public eye. True he is part and parcel of the ship on all her voyages; he is the commander-in-chief, the executive head of the monster carriers of the sea, and his word is law, until he practically



THE OCEAN DOCKS, VICTORIA.
To Which the Pilots Bring Their Vessel. The Photo Shows the Empress and Several Other Trans-Pacific Liners at Dock.

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