

WRECK RECOVERY RULES REVIEWED

The sport of scuba diving has finally attracted the attention of the Federal Government, and persons who enjoy exploring long-sunk ships may shortly find themselves subject to a new and stiffer set of regulations affecting this aspect of their favourite pastime. Some skin divers, it appears, have been accused of "the removal of objects of historic value" from submerged wrecks. A Department of Transport release on this topic states that "the adequacy of present regulations" is under study "in view of the ever-widening public interest in skin and scuba...diving as a sport", and goes on to outline as follows the existing regulations governing "recovery of wreck":

Officials of the department's Marine Regulations Branch point out that, under Section 510 of the Canada Shipping Act, any person who recovers wreck from Canadian waters is required to deliver it to the Receiver of Wreck, Department of Transport, as soon as possible. Apart from the department's officials who hold the title of Receiver, Collectors of Customs also hold such authority.

Under some conditions, the Minister of Transport may dispense with the delivery of wreck. Despite this, the person who may be permitted to retain the wreck does not thereby acquire any claim of ownership to it and is faced with the possibility of a claim

being made by the original owner or such persons as may hold legal ownership of the objects.

The section also applies "to any aircraft or any part thereof, or cargo thereof, found derelict at sea outside the territorial limits of Canada and brought within those limits".

HOW TO RETAIN POSSESSION

Any person recovering wreck and wishing to retain possession of it should immediately apply to the Receiver of Wreck or nearest Collector of Customs, giving the circumstances surrounding his find, and ask the Receiver to submit an application for dispensation from delivery. Pending receipt of a decision to dispense with delivery, the applicant is responsible for keeping the salvaged items in safe custody and must allow them to be inspected. The Transport Department, in this regard, is co-operating with other federal departments and provincial governments that have an interest in the preservation of objects of historical interest.

The department points out that, if any person who takes possession of wreck fails, without reasonable cause, to comply with the requirements of the law, he is liable to a fine not exceeding \$400 and, in addition, a fine of double the value of the wreck. He also forfeits any claim or right to claim salvage with relation to the salvaged material.

SEAWAY TRAFFIC FIGURES

Traffic records for the St. Lawrence Seaway, established only last year, are being re-written as the St. Lawrence and Welland canals complete the first three months of operation in the 1965 navigation season. The total tonnage for June, on either canal, exceeded that of any single month of 1964 - the peak traffic year since the opening of the Seaway in 1959.

Traffic through the Montreal-Lake Ontario section during June amounted to 5,685,000 tons, an increase of almost 10 per cent over that for June 1964. More than 14,300,000 tons have passed through the eastern section of the Seaway so far this season, up by 4 per cent over the record set a year ago.

Welland Canal traffic shows a similar trend, although total tonnage figures are considerably higher. The season total to date of 17,900,000 tons reflects a rise of 3.4 per cent over the comparable three-month period a year ago, while June tonnage of 7,200,000 tons represents an increase of 9 per cent over that for the same month in 1964.

CHIEF CARGOES

Iron ore is the leading commodity in transit through the two canals, accounting for 4,600,000 tons in the Montreal-Lake Ontario section totals and some 6,350,000 tons through the Welland Canal.

Wheat, though flowing in lesser quantities than a year ago, has exceeded 3,000,000 tons through the St. Lawrence and approximately 2,800,000 through the Welland.

The most striking increase in traffic during the 1965 season so far has been in general cargo tonnage, highlighted by more than one million tons of manufactured iron and steel products upbound through both waterways.

WAR ON OIL DUMPING

Helicopter patrols over Lake Ontario, Lake Erie and St. Lawrence River have been resumed for the 1965 shipping season in the campaign to halt oil pollution of Canadian waterways by shipping. Lending new weight to the drive against oil dumping is the increase in maximum fine for such offences from \$500 to \$5,000. The master of every foreign vessel entering Canadian waters is notified of the anti-pollution regulations and penalties for infraction of them.

There will be inspectors from the Steamship Inspection Service of the Department of Transport aboard the patrol helicopters to keep a watchful eye on incidents of waste-oil dumping. The Department will also continue to investigate pollution charges and to take legal action when necessary, on the basis of reports of oil dumping submitted by inspectors stationed at various centres along the Great Lakes system, by ship captains, pilots of aircraft of the armed services and commercial aircraft and other interested persons who witness such incidents.

During the 1964 shipping season, the masters of eight ships were fined for permitting discharge of oil from their vessels in Canadian waters.