

### New Boats for Upper Lakes.

It is estimated by The Globe of Toronto, that the carrying capacity of vessels on the upper lakes this season will be at least 1,200,000 bushels over last year. This will be afforded by thirteen additional boats. Two more may be added before the end of the season, which would make the total increased bulk space about 1,300,000. The carrying capacity in 1906 was approximately 4,500,000 bushels. The heavy grain traffic from Western Canada, increasing as it is year by year, is largely responsible for the rapidity with which new boats are being built for lake business.

The continued northward trend of grain raising must give more and more importance to the lake ports and lake marine of Canada. A generation or more ago, there was a Canadian fleet of small wooden vessels that did considerable grain carrying from Milwaukee and Chicago to Canadian ports, but these carriers disappeared from view before competition from United States vessels of a larger class. When, however, the wheat fields of Western Canada began to send their harvests to seaboard by way of Canadian ports on Lake Superior, there began a new development for the carrying trade. The lake fleet has grown steadily, and in making their additions to it Canadian investors have had their old-time advantage of being able to secure their tonnage from British ship yards at considerably less cost than United States owners must pay for American built vessels.

### St. Lawrence Route.

The St. Lawrence route was ably championed by Hon. Mr. Brodeur, in London, when recently addressing the committee at Lloyds. He dealt fully with the improvements being made to further insure safety of navigation and explained that the accidents last year were in no way due to the conditions of the channel. He dwelt upon the amount of dredging which has been done every year, and the achievement of a thirty-foot channel from Montreal to the sea at high tide. In short, he explained fully the extensive works which are being carried on by the Canadian Government towards perfecting the St. Lawrence route, by light-houses, gas buoys, fog alarm stations, wireless telegraphy, telephone and signal service, wrecking plants, and submarine signals, and referred to the regular inspection of the channel. He pointed out that the pilotage system was under Government control, and referred to the improvements in lighting and buoying Halifax and St. John harbors, mentioning also the usefulness of the tidal survey and meteorological service. The bearing all this should have upon insurance rates was strongly enforced by Mr. Brodeur.

### Georgian Bay Canal.

Practically all the survey work of the Georgian Bay Canal Commission has been completed, so that detailed information regarding the entire proposed waterway of 460 miles will be ready for presentation to Parliament early next session. The estimated cost of completing the project is \$105,000,000, this being for a continuous twenty-one foot waterway from Georgian Bay to Montreal, via the French River, Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa River. Of the total 460 miles rather more than half is naturally navigable for vessels of the larger lake type. Much of the remaining length will require only dredging, etc., while less than forty miles call for actual excavation. The particular survey work for this summer will concern itself with the control and storage of the surplus waters of the Ottawa, so as to reduce the flood level of that river and increase its low water level. This control of the waters of the Ottawa will greatly enhance their power value, and it is estimated that there will be 500,000 horse power available along the course of the river. A feature of the report that is of special interest to Montreal is the statement that an incidental result of controlling the high and low water levels of the Ottawa will be a raising of the low water level in Montreal harbor.

### Union and Non-Union Fire Companies.

Union and Non-Union companies are compared each year by The Insurance Post, of Chicago, with regard to their loss ratios and other particulars.

In 1905 the Union loss ratio fell below the non-Union loss ratio, standing 44.9 to 42.3. Last year, however, the Union loss ratio was 31 p.c. higher than that of the non-affiliated companies, owing to the fact that a larger proportion of the Union companies were doing business in San Francisco and were carrying the bulk of the risks. The non-Union showing as to its proportion of total assets, reserves and risks in force is affected, however, by the reinsurance of the German of Freeport in the Royal, which transfers those large figures to the Union side of the table, together with several other reinsurances of non-Union companies by Union companies. The expense ratio of the non-Union companies increased from 38.02 in 1905 to 38.83 in 1906, while the Union companies reduced their expense ratio from 36.01 in 1905 to 35.68 last year. The Union companies increased their proportion of the total assets from 68.28 to 70.10, of reserves from 70.36 to 72.04, of premiums from 71.19 to 72.85, of losses from 72.71 to 78.87, of expenses from 70.11 to 71.10, and of risks in force from 71.08 to 75.40. They fell off in surplus from 68.89 to 64.99.