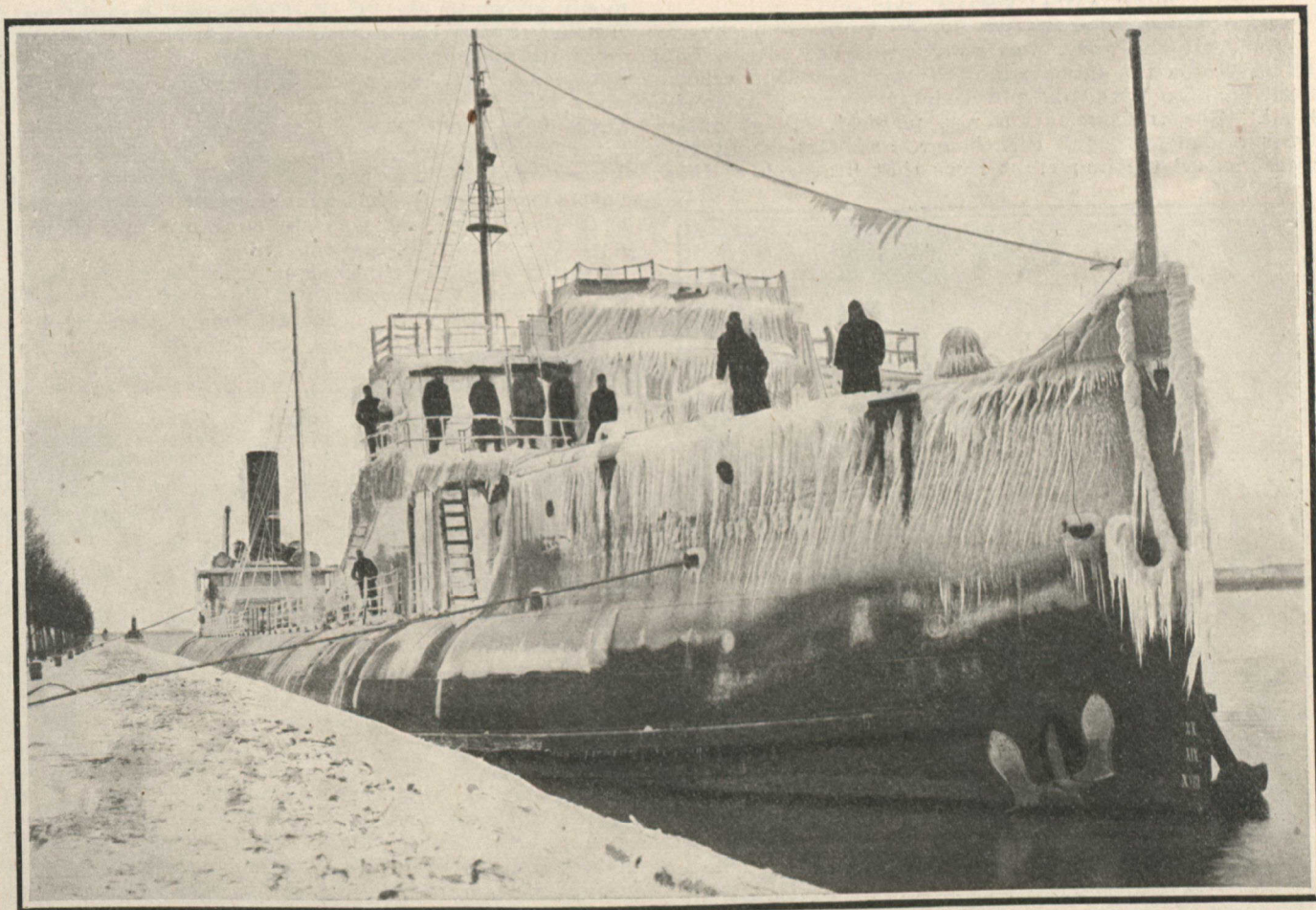


has not been ideally successful. But genuine progress has been made all along the line. Its operation is gradually becoming more effective each year. During the first few years after its adoption the commissioners were feeling their way and sounding public opinion. The system of appointment by merit was entirely new to American politics. "Festina lente" appears to have been the guiding motto of the day, but as the years rolled on public men began to find the commission a convenient dumping ground for their heavy burden of patronage. It enabled the politician to reply to hungry applicants for jobs, that he could not recommend appointments which later on might be exposed by the civil service commission as illegal. On the other hand the commission could not place the applicants on the eligible list for employment, until they had complied with the requirements of the civil service law. This has proved to be a good thing both for the politician and the public. One may gather some idea of the growing importance of the civil service in this state, by a glance at some of the work during the year from October 1, 1904 to Sept. 30, 1905. In that period 3,010 persons were examined for positions in the different grades of the classified service, 65 non-competitive and 140 competitive examinations were held and 581 men and 168 women received appointments. The non-competitive examinations largely related to matter of transfer and promotion according to the rules. The average age of those examined was about 39 years.

It is true that there are violations of the civil service law going on all the time. Just now we have an illustration in the attempt of the Democratic officials in Boston to exact a political subscription of 3 per cent. from all employees receiving salary of \$1200 or more per annum. The matter has been reported to the District Attorney of Suffolk County, and it is doubtful if

these officials will persist in their demand. But we must remember that all laws are violated, some to a greater and some to a lesser degree, according to their nature. In this mundane sphere, we cannot secure ideal perfection. It must not be forgotten that in Massachusetts no less than 33 cities and 4 towns have accepted the provisions of the civil service law. At the present time we have a capable and energetic board of commissioners. They are zealous for the public weal and are doing most excellent work. By the fair and consistent administration of this law, our public service in the Old Bay State is undoubtedly improving. We have a better educated and more competent class of persons in that service than we ever had under the old methods of political control.

As the commissioners say in their last report "no system of testing men for public office is perfect," but the present system does represent an immeasurable advance upon the "spoils" method of former days, under which, as President Roosevelt has justly observed, "outside politicians really made the appointments nominally made by the executive officers, the appointees being chosen by the politicians in question in the great majority of cases, for reasons totally unconnected with the needs of the service or of the public." The reign of the graft and political deals is not yet over in Massachusetts but its power is certainly more restricted than it otherwise would have been without our present civil service law. The Provinces of Canada have much to gain by the adoption of such a law. No state, province or commonwealth can do its best work without an intelligent competent body of permanent officials in the public service. No government is truly free which permits a giant system of patronage to hamper and control its political ambitions and to discourage intelligent, efficient service.



The Last of the Season Through the Sault Ste. Marie Canal.

Though Lakes Superior and Huron never freeze over, the St. Mary's River which connects them freezes solid, as do the two canals which afford a passage around the rapids. The last boats coming down from Port Arthur and Fort William in November usually have severe experiences as this photograph of the "Alexander McDougall" indicates.