

Stranding of the s.s. Samuel Marshall.

An investigation was held recently by the Dominion Wreck Commissioner, Capt. L. A. Demers, at Quebec, assisted by Capt. C. Koenig and T. Gough, as nautical assessors, into the causes of the stranding of the Central Canada Coal Co.'s s.s. Samuel Marshall near Lark Reef at the entrance to the Saguenay River, Sept. 8. The judgment set out that the absolute trust and the possible misinterpretation of the duties and responsibilities of a pilot, caused two men, the master, W. A. Tulloch, and the mate, C. Ross, especially the master, to forget their duties to a most regrettable extent. When the vessel left Little Saguenay wharf, the master saw to her unmooring and headed her down the river. Although according to the system followed on the vessel, his watch was until midnight, he left the bridge and retired to his room between 10.30 and midnight, and went to sleep, without issuing instructions of any kind, leaving everything to the pilot; even the lookout was not sent to his post. If the pilot's version is true, that he sounded the fog whistle, it failed to bring the master on deck to his duty. It was only when the shock of grounding was felt, that he was awakened and proceeded to the bridge. The mate also went to sleep without advising someone to call him, basing himself on the tacit understanding that the watchman would do that without request. It was also considered by him as understood that the watchman or lookout was to keep his lookout on the fore-castle head, and such was not done on this occasion. While the court finds much to blame in the mate's conduct, there is an extenuating reason for leniency in his case, and causes his excuse that had he been called he would have been at his post, to be accepted. The master's conduct in leaving the bridge without giving orders of any kind, is astonishing. It is true that both he and the mate had been working all day, and there being no second officer, the mate had to be about constantly to see to the cargo and prepare the vessel for her trip. The master was also undoubtedly busy with the cargo, getting ship's paper in order, and many other details to which a master is in duty bound to attend. The situation being known that there was one officer short, and being satisfied that the vessel was to leave at a certain time during the night, it seems to the court that if either the master or the mate felt some rest was needed before sailing, some means could have been devised to secure that rest before the vessel sailed, but such was not thought of, the idea predominating, no doubt, that there was a pilot on board, and through a mistaken interpretation of responsibilities, a happy-go-lucky method was adopted; perhaps such is general, but only discovered when a casualty occurs.

The court, composed as it is, of members who have had a vast and varied experience in shipping matters, each member having been in command, realizes that in these momentous times crews cannot be selected as one would wish, and owners have found difficulty in obtaining sufficient men to run their vessels, and those found are generally deficient in qualifications and experience. These conditions apply to foreign as well as inland navigation. The wheelman and watchmen examined are young fellows who have not had sufficient training to understand their duties unless a superior officer

is present, to guide, advise and instruct them. It was known by the master and mate, or should have been, that there was no light on the compass on the bridge. In view of the circumstances prevailing, of shortage and indifferent crews, it behoves the master and his official subordinates to redouble their vigilance and prudence and face conditions as they are found in a manly fashion. Weighing all details together, the court, without showing any undue severity, should deal at least with the certificate of the master, but in doing so, the intention to bring about a realization on the part of the masters and officers of their duties, would be nullified by the fact that the navigation season is nearly at an end, and a suspension of certificate would be fruitless. The court therefore exercises the other power it possesses, and condemns the master to pay two-thirds of the expenses of the investigation, and the mate the other third, the total being \$123.70. In addition, both master and mate are severely reprimanded for their indifference. The court found the pilot, E. Langlois, in default for failing to acquaint himself with the so-called telegraph to the engine room, for not having insisted on the presence at his side of the responsible officer of the vessel, and for not making some attempt to supervise the courses he was giving, and the work of the wheelman. His excuse that he thought some one in the wheelhouse was responsible for this, cannot be accepted. Owing to the circumstances already mentioned for not dealing with the master's certificate, the court fined the pilot \$100, to be paid by Dec. 27, and cautioned him that should he come before the court again and be found in default, his license will be dealt with.

Hawking Canadian Shipbuilding Contracts.

The following letter which appeared in a recent issue of the Journal of Commerce, Liverpool, Eng., from Donald Macleod and Co., London, Eng., will, no doubt, be read with considerable interest by Canadian shipbuilders and others concerned in the welfare of the shipbuilding trade on this side of the ocean.

"We have the following contracts for new steamers for sale building in British yards (Canada) for Norwegian account, viz:—Three 8,800 tonners, Robert Dollar type, one delivery end July-early August, one October, and one November, building by Wallace Shipbuilding Co., Vancouver, and we can sell them at \$145 a ton for the first steamer and \$140 for the two later. Also two 7,000 tonners building by Vickers, Montreal, delivery end of 1917, for which we will try \$135 a ton, all net to us.

"May we put on record here it seems to us absolutely disgraceful that it is possible for British colonial yards to take contracts to build ships for neutral countries when it is impossible for British owners to get reasonable deliveries from our home yards, and when we need every ship we can possibly secure in the near future to be under British control, and if the above is an example of how Britain is preparing for 'The War After the War,' the result can only be disastrous.

"British owners can still secure these contracts, but now only after the Norwegian holders have taken their profit. Surely this is a criminal loss of foresight on the part of our Government, who give no encouragement to British owners to

build ships abroad at prices required by builders, otherwise we could long since have secured a large fleet of up-to-date merchant vessels recently built and now building both in America and Japan, all of which have been secured by neutral countries."

It is not Canadian Railway and Marine World's intention to comment on the ethics of these particular transactions. Similar deals are probably taking place frequently, so we merely accept the information and note the prices quoted as evidence of abnormal times.

The correspondents quoted characterise it as "absolutely disgraceful" that Canada should take contracts to build vessels for neutral countries when it is impossible for British owners to get reasonable deliveries from their home yards. Surely this reason is very illogical. If it is impossible for British owners to obtain deliveries from home yards, and Canadian yards are open to accept contracts, one would think that British owners would flood Canadian yards with orders for new vessels. The Minister of Marine in a recent speech stated that there were plants splendidly equipped for the construction of steel steamships at New Glasgow, N.S.; Montreal, Que.; Kingston, Toronto, Collingwood and Port Arthur, Ont., and Vancouver, B.C., and that orders in council had been passed allowing these plants to build and export to foreign neutral countries, 21 steel steamships of varying tonnage. There is therefore sufficient evidence of the capacity and capabilities of the yards on this side to build vessels of a type especially suitable for ocean service under war conditions. Will British owners in search of new tonnage take advantage of the opportunity of building new tonnage within the Empire? Or will they, as is done in the letter quoted above shelter themselves under the complaint that "surely this is a criminal loss of foresight on the part of our Government, who give no encouragement to British owners to build ships abroad at prices required by the builders." There is no criminal loss, or lack, of foresight in the matter, except possibly on the part of the owners, who have not taken full advantage of the facilities offered. It is not a Government matter, and in the face of the figures quoted, viz., \$135 to \$145 a ton, the reference to "prices required by the builders" is superfluous.

In answer to a question in the British House of Commons, Nov. 30, it was stated that the British Government would communicate with the Dominion Government on the question as to whether it was in the national interest that the Dominion shipbuilding yards should build ships for neutrals, when it was so difficult for British shipowners to get deliveries.

Floating Dry Dock for Vancouver.—It is reported that arrangements have been completed for building a floating dry dock of double section, 18,000 tons capacity, by Vancouver Dry Docks, Ltd., the incorporation of which was mentioned in our last issue. C. Meek, of Vancouver, is stated to be the chief organizer of the project, and reports state that \$2,000,000 of bonds have been sold to Breed, Elliott & Harrison, Cincinnati, Ohio. The scheme covers also the building and operating of a complete shipbuilding and repair plant. Contracts for construction and machinery are reported to have been let, and it is hoped to have the plant in operation within a year. It is the intention to apply to the Dominion Government for aid under the act granting aid for the construction of dry docks.