

Recommendations as to Investigations into Casualties on the Great Lakes.

The following letter was sent to the Minister of Marine recently by L. Henderson, President of the Dominion Marine Association and Canadian Lake Protective Association, and A. E. Mathews and H. W. Richardson, First and Second Vice Presidents respectively, of the Dominion Marine Association:

The executive committees of the Dominion Marine Association and the Canadian Lake Protective Association, at a joint meeting in Toronto on Dec. 20, 1913, gave consideration to the Department's request for an expression of opinion regarding the finding of the Wreck Commissioner in the recent Turret Chief investigation, and at the same time revived a discussion which resulted some time ago in a recommendation for the appointment of a wreck commissioner with exclusive jurisdiction on the Great Lakes and other inland waters.

Dealing first with the larger question the meeting unanimously confirmed the opinion expressed in the previous recommendation to the effect that it is very desirable that the commissioner charged with the duty of investigating inland disasters should have from actual experience an intimate knowledge of the conditions on the Great Lakes, which differ so materially from those affecting ocean navigation, and as the office of commissioner has now been filled by a gentleman whose experience and training relate exclusively to ocean navigation, the committees mentioned unanimously resolved that the interests of all parties demand in all inland investigations at least the appointment of one or more assessors qualified by years of training to deal with questions quite beyond the experience of the court.

On behalf of the two associations named the undersigned accordingly ask that a capable master mariner of standing and having extensive knowledge of lake conditions and practice should sit as assessor in all investigations relating to navigation of the waters with which these associations are concerned. The committees recommend the appointment of Capt. J. B. Foote, of Toronto, as an assessor who should prove thoroughly qualified and acceptable to all parties.

The committees named considered Capt. Batten (who represented the inland point of view in the Turret Chief investigation) in all respects a most estimable man and skilled within the sphere of his activity, but they respectfully point out that his duties have for a long time confined his attention to the navigation of passenger steamers and for many years exclusively in the confined waters of the St. Lawrence between Prescott and Montreal.

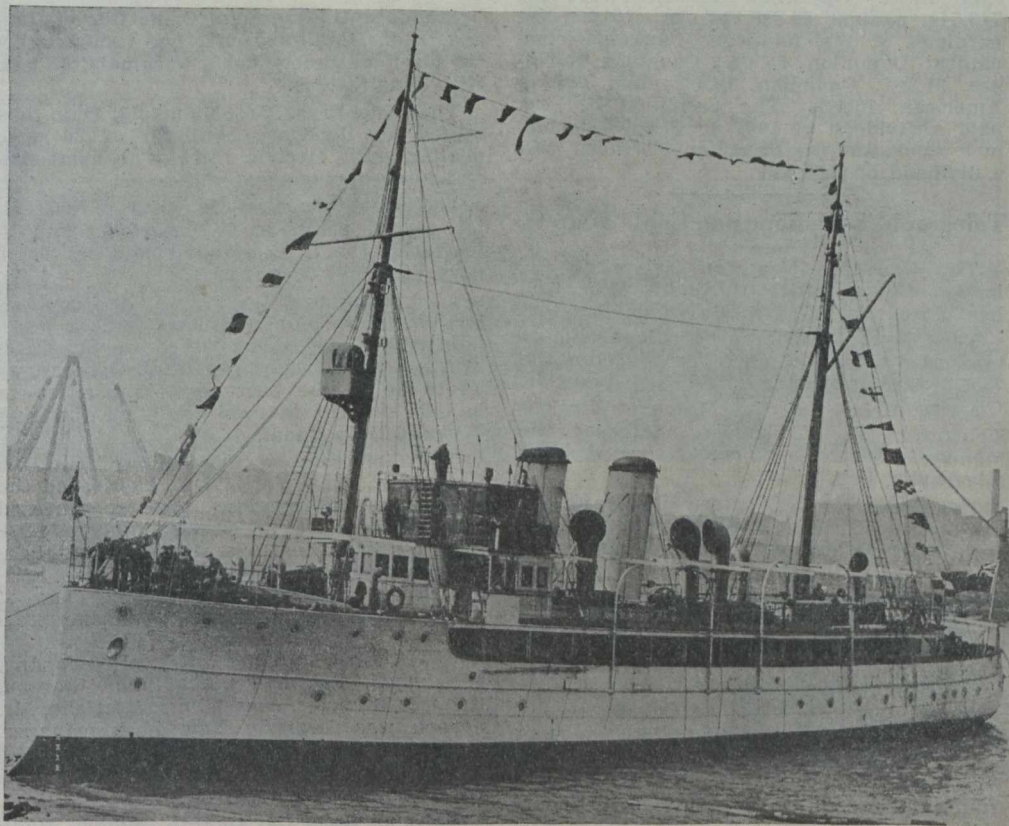
Dealing particularly with the finding of the court in the Turret Chief investigation, the committees desired especially to point out that there does not appear to have been any evidence in support of the conclusion that the failure of the boat to head up into the sea was due to her being short handed in the stokehold. The uncontradicted evidence showed a good head of steam and that the oilers filled the place of the missing firemen satisfactorily. Attention is also called to the fact that one reason oilers are carried is to provide fully for just such contingencies as arose in this case. A vessel is frequently short of firemen, through no fault of the master, and the conditions and exigencies of the trade on the Great Lakes are such that any criticisms of a master for leaving port short handed in the stokehold do not appeal to the committee mentioned as quite justified or fair.

The committees are of the opinion that the storm in question in this case was of a most exceptional character and that as so many vessels were completely lost in it, and the master of the Turret Chief left port with no warning of its coming, a lenient view might well be taken of his conduct in circumstances which must have been extremely trying.

As to the specific recommendations at the conclusion of the finding, the committees concur that modern sounding devices are desirable, but do not approve of the suggestion for "an officially fixed light load line," for various reasons, chief among which are the following, namely, that it is better and safer to trust the discretion of the master of a lake freighter to take water ballast at the proper time, that in still weather the requirement proposed might unnecessarily hamper the movements and speed of the ship, that the prevailing custom of taking on ballast as required after leaving port or discharging ballast on

regards hull and machinery, the accommodation, etc., as well as the propelling equipment, being practically complete. She was in fact almost ready for trial when floated. The keel was laid just early in Jan., 1913, and the ship has been built throughout under the inspection of F. L. Warren, M.I. N.A., M.I. Mech. E., of London.

The principal dimensions are as follows: Length overall, 200 ft.; length between perpendiculars, 185 ft.; breadth moulded, 32 ft.; depth moulded, 16 ft. The draught is limited to 10½ ft. when carrying a load of 175 tons. A ram stem and cruiser stern add to the appearance of the boat, which is a fine looking craft. A double bottom is fitted under the engines and the hold forward, and the hull is stiffened to resist ice, the propeller shafting being also housed in the hull for the whole of its length to prevent damage by ice. Watertight bulkheads divide the various compartments, and the bunkers are watertight also. Sliding watertight doors of the quick closing type are



Dominion Government Customs Cruiser Margaret.

approaching port—while carried out with good judgment—facilitates the progress of the vessel a very great deal, and that masters express an opinion against having water ballast in their ships unnecessarily or in still water. It is in fact claimed to be dangerous to retain water ballast in the hold in still waters, on account of its shifting nature. For these reasons the committees ask that this latter recommendation of the Wreck Commissioner be not adopted.

Launching of the Canadian Customs Cruiser Margaret.

The Canadian Customs cruiser Margaret, for patrol service on the Atlantic coast, was launched at Southampton, Eng., Jan. 14, the naming ceremony being performed by a granddaughter of the late Lord Strathcona, Mrs. J. B. Kitson, wife of Lieut. J. B. Kitson, R.N. The vessel took the water in an unusually advanced condition, both as

fitted to be worked from the upper deck. The bunkers have a capacity of 200 tons, giving a radius of action of nearly 2,000 miles at full speed, and about 4,000 miles at economical speed. The vessel is rigged as a fore and aft schooner, and has an outfit of boats consisting of a 30 ft. motor launch, a 26 ft. lifeboat, a 22 ft. captain's cutter, and a 16 ft. dinghy. For armament she will carry mounted on the forecabin deck two 6 in. quick firing guns of the latest improved type, with telescopic sights. She is fitted in a most up to date manner, carries a wireless telegraph outfit, is electrically lighted, and has a 24 in. projector searchlight of 25,000 c.p. fitted in the crow's nest on the foremast. A refrigerating plant is installed, and a complete cold store below contains separate rooms for meat, vegetables and other provisions. She is heated by steam throughout.

The propelling machinery consists of two sets of vertical reciprocating engines running at 180 revolutions a minute, and having a combined i.h.p. of 2,000. The i.p.