

in before they could be taken up, and will be carried away with the ice in the spring, causing considerable loss thereby.

Every effort has been made by this Department to obtain as accurate a return of each wreck which comes to the knowledge of the Department as it is possible to obtain, and when such returns are procured, they are immediately entered in the Wreck Register, and forwarded to the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, London, in accordance with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, and it is gratifying to be able to state that the efforts made by this Department to procure those Returns for the Board of Trade have been duly appreciated by that body.

It has also been found very important to obtain such returns for the information of the Government of Canada and the maritime interests of the Dominion, so that a record may be kept of the disasters which may occur from time to time on our coasts, and the cause thereof ascertained in order that the necessary measures may be taken to remedy the difficulty in future, in cases where additional lights, fog alarms, signal guns, buoys or beacons may be required.

In addition to the numerous new lights and fog alarms which have been established on the shores of Canada since the date of Confederation, for the purpose of rendering more safe and secure the approaches to our coasts, and thereby reducing the number of marine disasters which take place in our waters, I am of opinion that the new system which has just been inaugurated in this country of making it compulsory on masters and mates of certain vessels to be provided with certificates of competency or service before they can clear their vessels, will have a most beneficial effect on our mercantile marine, and will tend materially to improve the character and efficiency of the men who are entrusted at sea with the lives of those on board their vessels, as well as their own, and a large amount of valuable property. No master or mate can now obtain in Canada a certificate either of competency or service until he has produced evidence of his sobriety, a most important element in our examinations for either description of certificates, as there was reason to believe in former years that many of our marine disasters were caused by the too free use of intoxicating liquors. There is no occupation which requires more careful sober men than that of navigators in charge of sea-going vessels, as, in making a dangerous rocky coast, a slight mistake in defining their position on the chart on the part of the master or mate, may cost them not only their own lives, but also the lives of all on board the vessel under their charge, instances of which are frequently occurring, and many of our shipowners aware of the danger of allowing the use of liquor on board their vessels, have prohibited it altogether, either by officers or crew, except for medicinal purposes.

The Act relating to masters and mates, although it renders it compulsory for vessels over 150 tons clearing for any place except the United States, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, or any part of Canada, to have certificated masters and mates, exempts vessels under that size, and also all vessels of any size clearing for any of the places mentioned, from the operation of the Act. A vessel clearing from Montreal for New Orleans for instance, or from Quebec, or St. John, New Brunswick, or St. John's, New-