

THE CLOSE OF NAVIGATION.

City of Collingwood.
City of Midland.
City of Parry Sound
City of Toronto.
City of London.

These five steamers, owned and operated by the North Shore Navigation Co., have again completed a successful season and are now safe in port, the City of Midland being the last to arrive.

During the past week the officers and men have been busily engaged preparing the fleet for the winter and ere this issue of THE BULLETIN reaches all of its thousands of readers, this work will be completed.

This winter the N. S. N. Co.'s steamers will occupy the entire V between the G. T. R. freight shed and the elevator, and also one berth at the town wharf. The flag ship of the fleet, the City of Collingwood, and City of Parry Sound will be at the freight shed, the City of Toronto and City of Midland at the elevator, and the City of London at the town wharf.

As has been the custom since the inception of the company, the season was closed with the annual supper, which was held on Wednesday evening last on board the steamer City of Midland, which had arrived the day before. This year the supper was a re-union to the employees exclusively.

Steward Fitzgerald had a splendid spread, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the fifty or sixty employees who were present.

Mr. C. A. Macdonald, the popular accountant of the company, occupied the chair, and Mr. P. L. Patterson, purser of the City of Midland, was vice chairman.

The toast list, which was short, was opened by "The Queen," to which the gathering sang the National Anthem.

In the absence of Manager Burton, the "N. S. N. Co." was replied to by Mr. Macdonald on behalf of the company in a short speech. He expressed the pleasure he felt in welcoming the crews home again, and assured them that the company had had a very successful season. On behalf of the president and officers of the company he assured them of the continued confidence and esteem which they placed in their men and their belief that there was not a nobler, more faithful, courteous, popular, and able set of seamen sailing these waters. The company felt that their property was safe in the hands of the men by whom their boats were officered and recognized the fact that the success of each succeeding season was in no small degree due to the faithful service rendered.

"The Captains," brought Capt. Bassett, LaFrance, Walton, and Cameron to their feet, all of whom expressed pleasure at being again safe home.

"The Pursers" followed. Messrs. Storey, Patterson, Currie, and McQuade, each made a few remarks.

The proceedings were brought to a close at an early hour by joining in singing the National Anthem.

The last boat, the Pacific, of the G. N. Transit Co., arrived in port on Friday afternoon amid the salutes of all the other steamers which had already reached the harbor, thereby closing another very successful season.

In the evening the annual re-union of the crews of the fleet was held in the spacious dining saloon of the steamer Pacific. Between sixty and seventy persons sat down to the table prepared by Steward Dyon and his assistants.

After enjoying this part of the programme, the usual toast list followed. Mr. Thos. Long, secretary-treasurer of the company, officiating as chairman.

"The Queen" was loyally toasted, the entire company joining heartily in the National Anthem.

"President of the United States" was replied to by Mr. W. Small, the newly appointed consul at this port, in a short speech, in which he expressed pleasure at meeting with the people of Collingwood and the hope that he might merit their high esteem, as had his predecessor, Mr. Quiggle.

The health of Capt. Foote was next proposed. In replying he sympathetically referred to the chair left vacant by the death of his late lamented friend, Josh. Belcher, whose memory, he said, would long be fresh in the minds of his fellow seamen.

To the toast "Manager of the G. N. T. Co." Mr. Cameron replied in his usual happy strain. He expressed his pleasure on being able to again welcome home all of the officers and men of the company's steamers. They had all done their duty and he believed had looked after the interests of the company. In referring to the death of Mr. Belcher, he said few would be more missed by the company. He was a true friend to the company and its officers, in fact to every person whom he was associated.

At this point, Mr. Thos. Long rose to add to what had been said by Capt. Foote and Mr. Cameron regarding Mr. Belcher, who had been so long with the company, and whose loss they so deeply lamented. He commenced with Capt. Campbell on the steamer Northern Belle in 1876, and had been in the employ of the company ever since. I am sure we all feel in our hearts the loss of Mr. Belcher, and I hope that he has gone to a better home and is receiving the reward we desire. One thing the seamen, their families, and the citizens feel proud of is that the seamen are, without exception, sober, industrious, good citizens. I do not confine this to the men of our own company, but to those of the N. S. N. Co. When we embarked in this business in 1876, it was a rare exception to find a craft propelled by steam, which did not carry a bar and sell liquors. When we started with the Northern Belle we had the courage to determine to do a paying business without the sale of liquor. As far as the company is concerned we have carried out this plan. We claim credit for sobriety and improved condition of seamen during the last twenty-one years. Most seamen of this port own their own homes and are as comfortable as any class. This is happy state of affairs. They are able to say, we have our houses, wives, and families, a condition seldom found among salt water seamen.

Mr. Cameron had referred to not being able to pay their officers and crews, which I know every man here treats as a joke. It has been our practice to pay our way at the close of each season and I hope this will not be an exception to the past 21 years.

This has been the most treacherous season, especially during the past six weeks, both on the ocean and the inland lakes, that has been for many years. There has been a great many disasters and loss of life, and vessel property and cargoes. The losses to the insurance companies has been very heavy. When we consider this, when

considering the size of the port and the number of vessels which sail from this port to the North Shore and other ports, all of which have returned safe without loss of life, we should feel proud. A great deal of the success is due to the superior skill and experience of the seamen, their sobriety and united action. We all have reason to be proud that we are winding up with such little damage.

Mr. Long concluded his address hoping the officers and men of both lines of steamers would enjoy good health, a prosperous winter, socially and morally, and again meet next fall.

Short speeches were also made by Capt. P. M. Campbell and Mr. George Moberly. Mr. P. Paton favored the company with a song, and Purser Hewitt and McClelland contributed a number of instrumental pieces.