

# BELGIAN SHIP HERE ON TRADE MISSION

## Barquentine Mercator Is Greeted by Crowd at Laurier Pier

### RECEPTION AT CITY HALL

#### Officers Greeted by City Officials — Sailing Vessel Made Easy Voyage From Antwerp

Her tall masts stark against the sky, the Belgian auxiliary barquentine Mercator eased gently into her berth at Laurier Pier Saturday morning, her 500 h.p. Deisel engine performing the task. Here for Belgo-Canadian Week celebrations the arrival of the Clyde built training vessel, under Commandant Remi Vandesande, marks the first visit of an official ship from its country to Montreal.

"Good weather with head winds calling for very little sail made her voyage from Antwerp enjoyable to all on board," said Commandant Vandesand in perfect English, which he acquired during four and a half years service under the British flag. He revealed that it was the second time he had ben in a Canadian port, having, as an officer of the British merchantman, Marlborough Hill, called at Vancouver in 1910.

Some of the ventures of the colorful vessel were related by her captain, Rene Becu, who displayed curious statuettes and pottery he had picked up while the Mercator was at anchor off Easter Island on an archeological expedition in December 1934.

"It was our most difficult anchorage," he said. "Because of shifting winds and high seas we were compelled to change position 50 times during our month's stay."

They sailed to Belgium with a cargo that included two statues weighing six tons, one going to the Trocadero Museum in Paris. Their subsequent voyage took them up the Amazon as far as Manaos and on their return they put in at Colon, Panama Canal Zone, to take on the remains of Father Damiens which had been brought from the leper colony of Molokai, Hawaiian Islands. At the pier at Antwerp the King of the Belgians met the ship in honor of his country's famous missionary.

#### VISITED LONELY ISLAND.

On her voyage which ended just a month before leaving Belgium bound for Montreal the Mercator anchored at St. Helena where Commandant Vandesande planted a tree at Napoleon's grave. Tristan da Cunha, called "the loneliest island in the world," was visited next. The commander felt that the reputation of this island was rivalled by Pitcairn. Before again seeing her home port the training ship had put in at Cape Town and Lobito, Angola.

All aboard are Belgians except three Luxemburgers, a Dutchman and a German, the last being Herman Fick, the carpenter. The ship's surgeon, Wratechlaw Zaslavsky, is a Russian emigree, now a naturalized Belgian, who formerly served in the White Army during the Russian Revolution.

The cadets received two years' training before sailing with the Mercator when they are trained for the naval reserve and the merchant marine. It was explained that from shortly after the war Belgium had been without any naval vessels, but that the cadets enlisted in the British and French Navies, mainly the latter because there was no language handicap.

The sole passenger is Jose Gers, a writer, who is representing four Belgian newspapers located in Brussels, Antwerp and Liege.

On the way back home the ship will visit Iceland. The public was able to go over her yesterday and will be permitted to do so again today and Wednesday from 9.30 to 12 in the morning and from 1.30 to 4.30 in the afternoon.

#### WELCOMED AT PIER.

Among those who welcomed the Mercator at Laurier Pier were Maurice Heyne, Belgian consul general; Captain J. P. Dufour, Harbor Master; Lieut.-Col. Emile Vailancourt, president of the Belgo-Canadian Week reception committee; Leon Mercier Gouin, president of the Canadian section, Belgian Maritime League; Col. B. W. Browne, acting commanding officer, M.D. No. 4; Commander E. R. Brock, commanding officer, R.C.N. V.R.; as well as delegations from the Union Belge and the Association of Belgian Veterans in Canada.

The commander and officers received official welcome at the City Hall by Ald. A. E. Goyette at noon Saturday.

The officers and cadets participated in a celebration in Lachine yesterday morning where they took part in a parade from Sixth avenue and Notre Dame street to the City Hall where Mayor Anatole Carrignan and the council received them. They proceeded to Holy Angels Church, at the door of which they were greeted by the band of Piche Academy, conducted by M. B. Verdickt. Following high mass in the church a reception was tendered them by the Army and Navy Veterans of Lachine.

Also taking part in the Lachine celebration were delegations from the Lakeshore Army and Navy Veterans' Association, St. Jean Baptiste Society, Knights of Columbus, Union Belge, headed by G. Souzdyns, president, and Association of Belgian Veterans, headed by H. Gramme, president.

Last night entertainment was provided at the armory of the 65th Regiment. Captain J. J. Goulet, the Union Belge and the Belgian acted as hosts.

#### City Leaders Absent

A wedding almost put a bit of a crimp into cementing international trade relations at the City Hall on Saturday, but Council Leader A. E. Goyette came to the rescue in a cutaway and the situation was saved.

The Belgian trade mission to Canada was converging on the City Hall for a courtesy call. Maurice Heyne, the Belgian Consul here, was coming up with Capt. R. Van de Sande, commandant of the Belgian training ship Mercator which docked at Laurier pier with a goodwill contingent of cadets.

The daughter of Ald. Ovide Taillefer, chairman of the Executive Committee, was getting married Saturday morning, and his fellow-commissioners and most alder-

men were at the celebration. His Worship Mayor Raynault was in Europe, and Pro-Mayor Cote was somewhere in the States. What to do, and who to receive the guests?

A hurry-up call was put through, and in post haste from the wedding came the Council Leader, in morning clothes. Belgian Consul Heyne was all dressed up too, while the commandant was in dress uniform with sword. Ald. Goyette received in his usual hale and hearty manner, had the visitors sign the golden book, and then went off to inspect the good ship Mercator at her pier.