

were brought into force in March last. It is to replace the latter in the condition in which it was, and in which it was intended to remain, that this short bill was introduced, which provides that :

No vessel which is not registered in Canada, and which is employed exclusively in fishing or on a fishing voyage, shall be subject to the payment of or shall pay any rate or duty imposed by the Act hereinbefore cited.

That is to say the fishermen who are to have the benefit of this hospital fund are Canadian fisherman. I was under the impression that perhaps my hon. friend was right in suggesting that we might be making a change which would be inconvenient, and possibly inhospitable ; but I find that the same rule applies in the United States. There the hospital privileges appear to be confined to the United States fishermen, and we are only keeping the law in the position in which it was in 1874, and are making it exactly the same as the American law in that respect upon this subject.

HON. MR. POWER—Perhaps the hon. gentleman will be good enough to read the short Act of 1884 so that members can understand it.

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I will first read the Act of 1882, so that hon. gentlemen can see the bearing of this legislation :—

“No vessel, whether British or foreign, employed exclusively in fishing or on a fishing voyage, arriving in any port in Canada, after the coming into force of this Act, shall be subject to payment of or shall pay any rate of duty imposed by the Act cited in the preamble to this Act, and its amendments.”

The Act of 1884 provides :—

“Notwithstanding anything in the Act passed in the forty-fifth year of Her Majesty's reign, chapter nineteen, for amending the Act cited in the title to this Act, the master or person in command of any fishing vessel registered in Canada on his behalf, may pay the dues chargeable on such vessel under the Act last mentioned, before leaving on a fishing voyage from its first port of outfit; and if the said dues have been paid at such port on any such vessel, before leaving on a fishing voyage, in any calendar year, the master or person in charge of such vessel, and the mariners employed therein on such voyage, if sick, shall have the same rights and be entitled to the same benefits as those of other vessels on which the dues imposed by the said Act have been paid, in

any Port where there is a Collector of Customs :—

By this Act, therefore, the benefits of the fund were extended to fishermen, which previous to that Act was not the case. The Revised Statutes makes no distinction at all as to the fishermen who may avail themselves of these privileges.

HON. MR. MILLER—Have you the American law on the subject ?

HON. MR. ABBOTT—I have not, but I have something equivalent to it. In the annual report of the Supervising Surgeon General of the Marine Hospital Service of the United States for the year 1886, he says :—

“When the service was supported by a tax on the beneficiaries, it was held that those only who had contributed to the fund could receive relief from it, but soon after the enactment of the law providing for the support of the service from the tonnage tax, applications for relief began to be received from fishermen, claiming that as their vessels paid tonnage duty they became contributors to the fund.”

So that up to that time fishermen in the United States were on the same footing as Canadian fishermen were up to 1874. The matter was referred to the Solicitor of the Treasury, and on the receipt of his opinion the following circular was issued :—

“In accordance therewith persons employed on vessels of the United States engaged in the fisheries will hereafter be admitted to treatment under the same regulation and conditions as other American seamen.”

That shows the position taken by the United States to be the same as our own, and to have been the same as ours all along. For a certain time they did not regard fishermen as seamen, and did not admit them to the privileges of this fund. They subsequently recognized fishermen as seamen, restricting to their own fishermen the benefits of the fund.

HON. MR. HOWLAN—When the matter was up the other day I took exception to the Bill, and I still take the same exception, regretting that such a Bill should be called for, because it says, “No vessel which is not registered in Canada, and which is employed exclusively in fishing, shall be subject to the