

by the Collector of Customs at the nearest port, after reporting to him; and no foreign vessel should receive such permission, as it is contrary to the Customs Law, and should be placed under detention in case of violation.

"I have the honor, &c.,  
(Signed) "J. JOHNSON."

"To Collector of Customs."

This was dated 8th March, 1878, and it was regarded by me as a most inhumane document. I made some enquiry about the matter, and I put a notice on the paper to enable me to move for a return of correspondence. I investigated the matter after the papers were brought down. I came to the conclusion that the Canadian Government was not so much to blame after all. I am free to admit that this circular letter is not exactly couched in such language as would lead one to believe that tugs could go to the assistance of vessels in distress without getting permission from the collector at the nearest port. It is contended now, by the hon. member for Monck, that it is not intended to prevent any vessel from going to the rescue of property or for the purpose of saving life. It is quite possible that that may be the fact, but I think it would have been far better if the Commissioner of Customs of that day had made that fact quite clear and explicit. The result was, however, that a good deal of ill-feeling sprung up on both sides of the boundary line. I am perfectly satisfied that it is not altogether in the interests of humanity that the correspondence has taken place which is referred to in the motion now before the House. I am satisfied that the Secretary of State at Washington has been induced to commence this correspondence and to make those complaints by the wrecking ring of the American Union. I feel quite certain that the correspondence has not taken place with a view of bringing about reciprocity; but whether or not it be true that they are able to outstrip Canadian enterprise in wrecking, whether or not it be true that there is not a sufficient force on the Canadian side in the wrecking service to give assistance in all cases, I am quite satisfied that the correspondence which has taken place has certainly done some good, for we find that in the present Session application has been made for the incorporation of a company for salvage and wrecking purposes. To-day I presented a petition from some influential gentlemen, praying to be incorporated as another company for the same purpose under the name of the St. Lawrence Wrecking and Salvage Company. If these companies are incorporated—as I take it this will be—and as we have men of ability and means in this country who understand the business and are desirous of investing their means in such enterprises, there is every reason why the Government of the day should be cautious about bringing about a reciprocity in this particular matter. I suppose it is not difficult to imagine what the result of reciprocal arrangements between the American Government and the Canadian Government might be. We can well imagine that the Americans would completely outstrip our Canadian tug and wrecking service, as it is now constituted; and therefore, when the Government see that there are gentlemen who are willing to invest their means and who are asking for bills of incorporation, they should be allowed to go into the enterprise. I see by one Bill before the House that the capital stock is \$300,000, with the right to increase it to \$1,000,000. The Bill I shall have the honor to introduce will ask that the capital stock may be declared to be \$500,000, with power to increase it to \$1,000,000. So that we have the enterprise, the energy, and the ability, and the means to establish a first-rate wrecking service in this country. Therefore, I think the Government should be careful before they bring about that reciprocity which the Americans desire. We know perfectly well that this last year there has been an immense loss of life and property on the inland lakes, and it may be that there has not been sufficient aid and assistance given

Mr. ROBERTSON (Hamilton).

to this service. I think that before another stormy season comes about we will find the Canadian wrecking service to be quite ample and sufficient to protect, not only all Canadian vessels which may be wrecked, disabled or endangered in Canadian waters, but American vessels as well. I think there are good reasons why the Government should know what the feeling of this House is before they grant the reciprocity which is asked for by the American authorities.

Mr. BOULTBEE. This question has occupied my attention for many years, and I think many hon. gentlemen will agree with me that the interests of our lake and river navigation are not sufficiently attended to. We have become so essentially a railroad people, we are so absorbed in railway enterprises, that we have more or less neglected this great branch of industry. It seems to me, provided as we are by nature with such magnificent water communication, that we are untrue to ourselves in every respect, if we neglect to foster the great interests which are connected with those waters. It has been a matter of painful interest to many of us, it was to myself, at any rate, that during the recent season there was such an enormous number of disasters in our lake navigation, a number of disasters that might not have occurred if proper care had been given to prevent them. As the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Dawson) suggested, I think there has been too much carelessness as to the system of inspection whereby vessels navigating those waters should be carefully looked after, so that property should not be wasted and that life should be preserved. A strong feeling exists amongst men who understand the subject much better than I do, that there is a gross carelessness existing as to the means that should be used for inspecting vessels. Not only during the past season, but for years past, there has been a loss of human life, with its accompanying misery, that is utterly appalling to contemplate. Now, I do not understand the subject sufficiently to indicate the action that should be taken by the Government as to this system of wrecking service. I can understand that, in a national point of view, we should desire to nurse our own marine and to foster our own Canadian industries, and it would be inopportune and improper to allow American companies to engross this service altogether. Nor is it necessary that such a state of things should be allowed to ensue, because we have not proper means for preserving life and rescuing vessels, since wrecks, as I understand, take place to a much larger extent on the Canadian shore than on the south shores. I think the interests involved are sufficiently large to warrant the Government in taking some further action and assisting in developing a system whereby vessels, either wrecked or in danger of being wrecked on the coast, may have prompt assistance. Both the interest of our national industry and the interest of humanity demand it. I understand there are certain Bills before this House contemplating the encouragement of some means for more carefully and more usefully prosecuting this business, and I trust they may be sanctioned. I know that amongst men connected with this matter in Toronto and elsewhere, there is a feeling prevailing, with respect to the navigation of our lakes and rivers, that there has been a culpable neglect, not only on the part of the late Government but of this Government also, in attending to this important interest. I do not desire to shelter one Government at the expense of another, and if the Government I support has been neglectful of this matter, I must censure it as I would those to whom I am opposed. It may be said for the present Government that they have not only to do their own duties but to pick up the business neglected by their predecessors, to put our financial position into shape, and to develop our National Policy. But while they do this, they must still not neglect the interests of which we are now speaking. It is of great importance to