

HON. MR. ABBOTT—The object is not to exclude fishermen from any privileges they ever had : it is to restore the Bill to the position in which it stood before the revised statutes of last session were passed.

HON. MR. HOWLAN—I hope the statute will stay as it is. This Bill is a step in the wrong direction. When we remember that the British flag covers two-thirds of the carrying trade of the United States we can readily understand the importance of this Bill. Let me for one moment put before you an illustration : Two vessels start out, one under the American flag the other under the British. The American vessel fishes for cod until September and then goes into the mackerel trade and after that is over, comes to the Maritime Provinces for a load of produce. During that time one of her men becomes sick. Now, no country has a better record, not even Great Britain, for the care it takes of seamen than the United States. Every headland is lighted, every harbor is provided with a hospital, which is open to all the nations of the world, and I do not think we should for this paltry tax of $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents per ton shut out sick seamen from any country from our hospitals. What is the man going to do in a case of the kind I have mentioned? The mariner must be sick from some chronic disease or be disabled by some serious accident and is he to be shut out from the hospitals of Canada on some paltry excuse of this kind? That was not the object for which hospitals were established. It is not in accordance with the spirit of the age—it is not in accordance with the policy of a powerful nation like Great Britain or of a young Dominion like this. It would be most unfortunate, especially at this particular time, if an American ship were driven by stress of weather, or any other cause, into one of our ports that she should be dealt with as is suggested in this Bill. Suppose a ship comes in without money and a sick or disabled mariner is landed who is refused admission to an hospital : I say it would be a most unfortunate thing, and I think that the good sense of the House will see that we should have our hospitals open, as they were intended to be, for

sick or disabled seamen from any part of the world. Up to a recent time it was an open question whether a fisherman was a seaman or not—whether he was not a sort of land lubber or *quasi* sailor, but that has been settled. It often occurs that bank clerks, doctors and others who are broken down in health embark in those vessels and pass as fishermen. They get sick in the gulf and are landed, and under a consul's certificate they were formerly sent home as sick seamen. The law has recently been amended on that subject to put a stop to the practice. We have been treating the United States on the same principle that they have been treating us. We have thrown open our hospitals to them, and they have thrown open theirs to us. We send a vessel to Labrador to the cod fishery : perhaps she meets with poor success and she is then put on the mackerel catch and at the end of the season takes her cargo of codfish, or mackerel, to the United States for the purpose of selling the produce of the whole season. She is still regarded as a fishing vessel. Suppose one of her men gets sick on entering the port of Boston, or some other port, how would we like if he were refused admission to a hospital and were thrown there at the mercy of the waves? That is not the way the American Government treats a man. You have to pay your two and a-half cents a ton, and if any of your men get sick the hospitals are open to them. We should reciprocate that, particularly as we are engaged largely in the fishing trade and especially at the present time there should be no small causes for irritation between the two countries. It would be a most unfortunate event if an American fishing vessel should land at some port of the Dominion with a sick seaman and be informed that he could not be cared for there unless the captain was prepared to lodge four or five hundred dollars security. Are we to say in such a case that we provide hospitals and medical assistance for our own seamen only? There is no reason in my experience, and I am sure in the experience of anyone who has had anything to do with marine matters, which would lead one to the conclusion that the hospitals should not be free to all on both sides of the line.