

(2.)

OTTAWA, 20th April, 1875.

The undersigned, with reference to the Reports to Council of his predecessor of the 10th and 14th May, 1873, recommending that Her Majesty's Government be requested to urge upon Parliament the exemption of Canadian Shipping from the operation of the Plimsoll Bill, as the passage of such Bill might injuriously affect Canadian Shipping, and hold out inducements to transfer a large portion of the tonnage of Canada to foreign flags, and with reference to his report to Council, dated the 5th instant, stating that he had received information that a Bill was again before Parliament relating to the same subject, and recommending that the British Government be requested by telegraph to urge on the Imperial Parliament the exemption of Canadian Shipping from the operation of such Bill, as he understood it might seriously affect the interests of such shipping, has now the honour to report that, although he has not been able to see a copy of the amendments proposed by Mr. Plimsoll to the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act, he has seen notices of such proposed amendments in the newspapers, from which it appears that such amendments, if carried, would seriously affect the interests of Canadian ships while in the United Kingdom, by subjecting them to compulsory inspections and restrictions with reference to deck-loading, free-board and seaworthiness.

As the shipping registered in Canada amounts to 6,930 vessels, measuring 1,158,363 tons register, of an estimated value of \$34,750,890, a large portion of such shipping being sea-going vessels trading to and from the United Kingdom, the undersigned is of opinion that it is very important where such a large Canadian interest is affected, that no Imperial legislation should be enacted affecting such interest until the Canadian Government has been afforded an opportunity of expressing an opinion on such proposed legislation, which would affect such a large amount of capital as is invested in this particular interest.

With reference to deck-loads, the Canadian Parliament has already considered this subject, and has provided legislation on it, restricting deck-loads on vessels leaving Canada during certain seasons of the year. A copy of the Act is herewith annexed.

With reference to free-board and overloading with grain and other cargoes at Montreal, the principal grain loading port in the Dominion, Parliament has already provided legislation on this subject, and the restrictions imposed have been found to be most advantageous to the safety of life and property. A copy of the Act is also herewith annexed.

Similar restrictions are also imposed at Quebec, and a General Port Wardens Act was passed last year extending the principles of the Montreal and Quebec Acts to such ports in the Dominion as may be brought under it by an Order of the Governor in Council. The ports of Halifax, Nova Scotia and Victoria, British Columbia, have recently been brought under the operation of this Act, a copy of which is herewith annexed.

With reference to the general question of seaworthiness of Canadian ships, the undersigned remarks that nearly all the sea-going vessels of Canada are classed either in British Lloyds, French *Bureau Veritas* or American Lloyds, which is a good guarantee of their strength and sea-going qualities, and he is now considering the propriety of recommending the adoption of rules and regulations for the voluntary inspection and classification of Canadian ships by the Canadian Government, provided for in the 54th section of the Canadian Act. 36 Vic., chap. 128, in order that Canada might have the advantage of possessing a national institute of its own for the classification of its shipping, the rapid growth of its Mercantile Marine and the large amount of Canadian capital now invested in this interest appearing to require such additional facilities for the classification of its shipping.

The undersigned, therefore, recommends that Her Majesty's Government be requested to urge on Parliament the exemption of Canadian shipping from the operation of any of the provisions contained in the amendments proposed by Mr. Plimsoll,