

*Immigration Act*

is concerned. This is purely a question of negligence. It is not a question whether it costs 25 or 50 cents or a dollar a head; it is purely a question of principle.

Mr. ROBB: It is on the principle that the Immigration Department places the responsibility on the transportation company in regard to the persons whom they transport to Canada. The transportation company are the only people who have made any money out of the business until the intending immigrant reaches the port of entry in Canada.

Mr. BOYS: Therefore, no matter how careful the transportation companies are, no matter how much they co-operate with the Department of Immigration, if they are guilty of no negligence or carelessness whatever, but a disease or trouble of some kind develops on the voyage, they are held responsible. I should think that is a change which might, to some extent, check the ardour of any transportation company, and in that way it would not enure to the benefit of Canada.

Mr. MILLAR: This legislation may or may not go too far, but a case which I had to deal with very recently inclines me strongly to the belief that we require some more advanced legislation than we have had. Let me point out what a hardship it means in the case of a certain Polish woman whom I know about, who saved money for some years and sent out for her sister who it was discovered afterwards was suffering from trachoma. This was only a few weeks ago; I have seen the minister several times on the subject and he has done his best. But the girl had to be deported. Another hundred dollars was spent to see that she should receive proper medical assistance. Now, here is an amount of hundreds of dollars which this woman spent to get her sister out here all the way from Poland and as a result of this disease she had to be sent back to her former home. This is a very great hardship and while theoretically there may be something in the objection that has been raised, I believe that some legislation is required to prevent steamship companies from bringing out people who eventually have to be turned back.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: The effect of this legislation is to make the steamship company a sort of insurance agency. Will the minister tell us what the theory is that exempts the passenger from liability for his own illness and makes the company responsible?

[Mr. ROBB.]

Mr. ROBB: The transportation company knows the regulations that are in force in this country and it is more than possible that the passenger does not.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: And that is the reason why a passenger who is taken ill should get free medical treatment. That is a truly unique principle to set up.

Mr. ROBB: The transportation company sell him his passage to Canada and they are the only people that make any money out of it up to that point. This will be an additional obligation on the companies to advise people to whom they sell tickets just what the regulations are. The hon. gentleman need not fear that it will keep immigrants from coming to Canada, because the whole thing will mean less than 25 cents a head.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: Why would the companies want to advise people? Does the minister think that the transportation companies are going to go out and say to people, "You had better all come out, because if you get ill we shall have to pay your bills"? But let us take the minister's statement, that the company is the only one that is making any money out of the business. I will not suggest, by way of illustration, hon. members travelling on the train on their way west, because they travel on passes; but let us take any one else who has to take a railway journey. Now, there is no difference in principle between a railway journey and a steamer trip so far as this particular question is concerned. The minister's statement is that the company is the only one that is making any money out of the transportation of immigrants; but there is no difference in principle between a movement of immigrants on sea and on land, and if the steamship transportation company is to be made the guarantor against the illness of passengers, why not carry the same principle into the carriage of passengers by railway companies? A man develops appendicitis at sea and under this legislation he is taken to a port, placed in a hospital and is attended by a doctor. And the transportation company has to pay the bill. The minister cannot

point to any exception in this provision; the company must pay the cost of the operation even if the trouble developed on the ship. Why should the company be compelled to pay the bill in this case any more than a railway company should be obliged to pay the expense in connection with an operation for appendicitis performed on a person who has developed this complaint on a railway journey? In both cases the company makes money out of the passage. What is the distinction?