

had this effect: that if an American vessel was wrecked in United States waters, a Canadian tug had not the privilege to tow it to an American port. This looked like a little sharp practice. I know this question is giving the Customs Department a good deal of trouble and annoyance. But the Americans ask for privileges from this Government on a misrepresentation of the facts. The difficulties are owing to the action, not of the Minister of Customs, but of some of his officials, and I ask him now to look into the matter. I ask him to see that the law relating to wrecking is carried out the same as any other law. Reference has been made to the desirability of having a life-saving service in connection with this service. In justice to the Americans I would say that the life-saving service of the United States is of great benefit both to Canadians and Americans, and if this Government could bear the expense of a life-saving station I should be glad to see it established. Something has been said about the boats. I assert that the *Prince Alfred* is the only boat in the fresh waters of this country kept for wrecking alone. While I have a vote in this House I shall protest against giving the Americans any concessions until they give us a *quid pro quo*. On a former occasion, the hon. member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) brought up a complaint in reference to a case where one of the boats went out to save life and property; but when the return came down it appeared that the Canadians had saved life at the risk of their own lives, while the Americans came in and made money. I trust our Government will consider this matter, and see that their officers carry out the law in this respect, and the instructions of the department, so that there may be no more extension of privileges to American tugs to enable them to do the work that should be done by Canadians, so long as life and property are not in danger. Of course, if there is any danger of life, or danger of the immediate destruction of property, by all means let the Canadian Government give the Americans every privilege to save it. But where there is no such danger, and our vessels are ashore, as wrecks, by all means give the employment in this connection to Canadians and Canadian tug owners. Money which should reach this country should not be allowed to pass into the hands of Americans, as in years gone by.

Mr. DAWSON. Without entering into the merits of this question, I may say that a great deal of life and property on the lakes might be saved by a system of proper inspection of vessels, to ascertain if they were seaworthy. If report be true, some vessels lost in Lake Ontario this season, with all the lives on board, went down on account of their unseaworthiness. Along the lakes there are many unseaworthy vessels that have been left lying a long time in the harbors, but whose owners will use them as long as they can be kept afloat; and in storms they go down. So from this cause we may expect an increased loss of life from year to year. We have had very few wrecks on the north coasts of Lakes Huron and Superior; because we have not only got good vessels, but the coasts are particularly well sheltered on the Canada side. But we had two vessels lost on those waters last year, the *Zealand* in Lake Ontario, and the *Simcoe* in the middle of Lake Huron. In one case there was a great loss of life. Whether the vessels were seaworthy or not, I cannot say; but it is reported that at this moment there are a great many unseaworthy vessels on our inland waters, and it is highly desirable there should be some system of inspection adopted. Believing that the object of this motion is very good, I shall have great pleasure in supporting it.

Mr. McCUAIG. The subject of the preservation of life and property in the case of wrecks is of great importance. I agree with my hon. friend from Algoma (Mr. Dawson) as to the value of a system of inspection. In November last, I noticed in the newspapers of the country the statement that a very large amount of property had been lost on the lakes, in

Mr. McCALLUM.

consequence of there being no tugs to render assistance to vessels on account of the operation of the Canadian law. I then took occasion to address the Buffalo Board of Trade on the subject. I believe those bodies in most of the western American cities are composed of respectable men, many of them interested in preserving shipping property. I think all that we require is for our Government to communicate with the American Government, when I have no doubt some reciprocal arrangement could be made, beneficial to both countries. In reply to my application to the Board of Trade, the Secretary wrote on the 7th December, as follows:—

“BUFFALO BOARD OF TRADE,

“BUFFALO, N.Y., December 7th, 1880.

“J. S. McCuaig, Esq., M.P.,

“Picton, Ont., Canada.

“DEAR SIR,—Your letter of November 22nd received and contents noted. Upon inquiry of the Insurance agents and parties interested in the schooner *Kingfisher* I find that there was no foundation for the paragraph that appeared in the *Buffalo Courier*, as far as “the wrecking law” was brought into question. No tugs of any kind could have rescued the vessel and the insurance agents so stated.

“As far as I can learn, the complaints of Americans are, that vessel owners state that the Canada Towing and Wrecking Company have not sufficient help—they own one tug called the *Prince Alfred* drawing 11 feet water with one steam-pump on board, and one tug *Jessie* drawing 8 or 9 feet water; these boats are generally located at Windsor, Ont., opposite Detroit, Mich.; this company has also one extra steam-pump kept ashore at some point for use when called upon.

“There is a tug called the *McArthur* which belongs to other Canadian parties, with a pump on board I think, and the location of said tug I know not.

“These are all the Canadian appliances for wrecking purposes from the foot of Lake Erie to the head of Lake Superior, near Duluth. Nearly 1000 miles of coast, four lakes and the rivers.

“You can readily see that these tugs are totally insufficient for the purposes required. If a vessel goes on shore at a *convenient spot* well, if not, what is to become of it?

“On the American side of the lakes, &c., are large harbors with many tugs and appliances at each port, enough to establish a patrol system, with the most powerful contrivances for succoring vessels, &c. Take Buffalo for instance, look at her fleet of tugs of immense power, all of which could be used for wrecking purposes.

“On the Canada side at Port Colborne there are three or four small tugs which could be used for wrecking if called upon at this end of Lake Erie, but they are generally engaged in towing vessels to and from the Welland Canal.

“Perhaps these few notes may assist you in making up a case in favor of some changes in the law of wrecking, of insisting that the Canadian Towing and Wrecking Company should have extended facilities. Shall be pleased to hear from you and give any assistance in my power.

“WILLIAM THURSTONE,
“Secretary.”

If the statements of this letter be true, and I have no reason to doubt them, it must be evident to every hon. member that we have not sufficient tugs or proper arrangements for the preservation of life and property for a coast line extending over so many miles. I have, myself, at Lake Ontario, witnessed the loss of several lives in its waters while 150 to 200 men stood on the shore. Why? Because we had no proper assistance. I contend that no laws of two countries lying side by side should in any way interfere with the enterprise of men prepared to jeopardise their own lives for the preservation of others, or with the demands of humanity. Judging from this letter from the Buffalo Board of Trade, I am satisfied that with the American and Canadian tugs united, they would be insufficient to save the life and property lost on the lakes in those severe storms. I hope whatever legislation may take place, that it will be in that direction. By proper arrangement, a great deal of property, and a great many lives might be saved at a cheaper rate than at present. I have had considerable experience with Canadian tug-boat companies, and have yet to learn they are very much more moderate in their charges than our American friends. With the exception of Mr. Donnelly, of Kingston, who has rendered very great assistance at moderate charges, who is a man of wonderful skill in this respect, I have yet to learn that Canadian tug-boat owners are, in cases of disaster, more moderate in their charges than Americans.