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Canadian shipping was required to be inspected by Government surveyors, and classed accordingly, but I think it would have a very beneficial effect on the value of the vessels thus classed, as it would probably improve their quality, reduce the rate of insurance, and increase the profits of the shipowner.

The number of lives lost during last calendar year on our coasts, and in connection with Canadian vessels, so far as the returns shew, was 75, but there is little doubt the actual number lost was much in excess of that number.

In the United Kingdom, a very large proportion of the coasting and small vessels which trade on the coasts of that country are classed at Lloyds' or some other office, so that their owners may be enabled to procure insurance on them at moderate rates, and I believe *all* the large vessels in that country are classed in some office. In this country nearly all the large vessels are also classed in some office, either English, French, or American Lloyds, but many complaints have been made by shipbuilders, shipowners, and others interested therein, that Canadian interests were not sufficiently considered in the rules laid down for the Government of these institutions, and the great objection has been that these rules were made by parties who could not be reached by the public opinion of Canada, and who in many cases were concerned with rival interests. While therefore I highly approve of the system of classification, I think it should be such a one as would be amenable to the public opinion of our own country, and capable of being reached by the maritime interests of the Dominion.

As regards the small vessels and coasters in this country, I am informed that very few of such craft are classed in any office, and that the outfit and ground tackle of this class of vessels are in many cases scanty and defective, and it is for such vessels more particularly that it appears very desirable to have some kind of Government inspection.

The principle of Government supervision as regards vessels suspected of being unseaworthy has been recently adopted by the British Legislature in the Merchant Shipping Act, 1871, which comes into operation this day, the 1st January, 1872. The 10th section of the Act alluded to provides that if a complaint is made to the Board of Trade, that any British ship is, by reason of the defective condition of her hull or equipments, unfit to proceed to sea, the Board may cause her to be surveyed, and if such ship is found to be in such a state that she could not proceed to sea without serious danger to human life, the Board may declare her unseaworthy, and she may be detained by any principal Customs' officer. The 11th section of the same Act also provides that every person who having authority as owner or otherwise to send a ship to sea, sends her to sea in an unseaworthy state so as to endanger the life of any person belonging to or on board the same, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, unless he proves that he used all reasonable means to make and keep the ship seaworthy, and was ignorant of such unseaworthiness, or that her going to sea in an unseaworthy state was, under the circumstances, reasonable and unavoidable, and for this purpose he may give evidence in the same manner as any other witness.

It might tend to the safety of life and property, if some such provision was made with reference to vessels in this country which might be suspected of being unseaworthy,