

proved that in consequence of the enforcement of the British law, the risks from shifting cargoes have been reduced almost to nothing, and if they have had that experience on the salt water, why should we not have the same experience on our inland seas. For my part, whether any one has petitioned for this measure or not, we have the experience of the good done by a similar law in England, and if anything can be done in the same direction for the benefit of our people, it is the duty of the Minister, the duty of the Government, and the duty of this House, to do what can be done. It may be, and I dare say it is the case, that there should be a discrimination between what would be a proper regulation for vessels of large tonnage, whether propelled by steam or wind, and the case of the small schooners plying along our coast. There may be different rules to be applied, but the object aimed at by this Bill will, I think, have the sympathy of the public, and will be to the benefit of the owners and the navigators of the inland shipping.

Mr. FREEMAN. There certainly should be different rules, as has been stated, applied to ships on the seaboard and ships on the inland waters. On the southern coast of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island we have long ago learned the art of loading ships, but it appears that in the inland waters the present generation are just learning that science, and it would be greatly to be regretted if, because we understand that work, that our knowledge should in any way interfere with the proposal to ensure greater safety for life and security for cargoes. I do not see that we could be at all injured by this Bill. I would object to it very strongly if our coasting vessels were required by this Bill to put in any kind of shifting board, but there is nothing in the Act which I think would interfere with our present mode of loading ships on the seaboard. I venture to say that there is not a cargo of oats which comes from Prince Edward Island—and this kind of grain is mostly carried coastwise in Nova Scotia—that is not in some way or to some extent secured by shifting boards, and the coasters put in such shifting boards as they deem necessary for the safety of their cargo. I think, as I said before, that there is nothing in this Bill which will interfere with their carrying on their work as they have hitherto done. I have some forty or fifty years experience with vessels, and I do not know of a case in which a coasting vessel has been lost, or in which she has suffered damage by reason of the want of shifting boards. As has been well observed by the member for Halifax (Mr. Kenny) this has occurred very frequently in ships crossing the Atlantic, but not in our coasting vessels.

Mr. MULOCK. They are vessels of larger tonnage.

Mr. FREEMAN. They are larger no doubt and sufficient care is not taken in stowing cargoes on the larger ships, but in the smaller ships we have no such accidents. If after a close examination there should be found anything in this Bill which would interfere with our coasting vessels it should be eliminated. As has been observed the profit of the little vessels of the Maritime Provinces for carrying oats is exceedingly small. They can scarcely sustain themselves on the freight they are getting now for carrying these cargoes and if any additional tax was imposed it would become very embarrassing indeed. It would also be a great annoyance to those vessels if officers could go aboard and indicate any kind of shifting board or the extent to which those shifting boards should be used. They might require stationary shifting boards, or indeed an officer inclined to be troublesome might put these vessels to a great deal of expense which would certainly be very much to be deplored. I think the hon. member for Queen's, P. E. I. (Mr. Welsh) who is better acquainted with this matter than I am, although I claim to have some acquaintance with shipping and the carrying of cargoes, if he sees anything in

this Bill that would interfere with our coasting trade and would point it out, I feel assured that the Minister would be very willing to correct the Bill in that regard. I am sure the hon. gentleman will not oppose any reform that the fresh-water sailors require. I think it would be very wrong indeed if he would interfere with the law being as stringent as possible to prevent them destroying life and destroying their cargoes. I am sure we have no desire to do anything of the kind, but let different rules be provided for the different interests. Don't allow us in the Maritime Provinces to be hampered because the men in the inland waters do not know how to take care of their cargoes. It is natural for us down there to know how to stow ships, and it is natural for us to protect our own men. It is as natural for us to protect our men who go on the salt water as it is to protect our families in the house. We look as much after the one as we do after the other. It is not only our interest but it is part of our conscience to do so, and we do not need to be forced to do it. But with regard to those gentlemen on the inland waters, give them laws, make them look after their ships, and sailors, and property, and compel them to do it if they will not do it of their own free will, as we do in the Maritime Provinces. I trust that there is nothing in this Bill to interfere with our coasting vessels, and if there is I should oppose the Bill. I do not see that the Bill interferes with us, and I will offer no opposition to it.

Mr. TUPPER. I have a proposition to make with reference to the suggestion at the earlier part of this discussion of the hon. member for Queen's (Mr. Davies). There seems to be a strong desire to strike the word "oats" out of the definition so that Act would not apply to those cargoes. I am informed by gentlemen acquainted with the shipping trade on the inland waters, who are most anxious that this Bill should pass, that it affects them so slightly that they would be willing to accept that compromise, the word "oats" being struck out; and if that meets the sense of the House, we might adopt that course.

On section 3,

Mr. TUPPER. The only alteration this section makes in the law is in defining unseaworthiness.

Mr. WELDON (St. John). You make an agent responsible.

Mr. TUPPER. That is the English provision, and I felt delicate in changing it.

Mr. WELDON (St. John). When a ship comes into St. John, the agent never sees the vessel, but sends it to sea as soon as the captain says it is ready. Under this provision the agent would be obliged to go down and examine the vessel, and the result would be that he would charge a double commission.

Mr. TUPPER. That is the present law of course, and it seems to be right. If the agent sends a ship to sea without taking any step to ascertain whether it is seaworthy or not he should be punished as well as others.

Mr. WELSH. I think myself that the agent knows very little about a ship. They do not know whether it is in good order or bad order, and, therefore, I think it would be improper to hold them responsible. Make the owners and the masters liable. I think the Minister should add a clause to this Bill to provide that some person should be appointed to look after the ships. In England there is, in every shipping port, a board of trade whose duty it is to look after every ship that comes in and goes out of the port, and to see that it is seaworthy. In this Bill I see a clause which I do not like. If a vessel is to be fitted up to take a cargo the port warden should have instructions to see that she is in proper order before she takes the cargo on board,