

wrong on which deck loading was sought to be regulated. That as well might we direct the height of masts or the quantity of canvas to be spread—everything depending on the condition and build of the ship; that our American neighbours, not bound by the law, would be able to enter our ports and take a large share of our carrying trade away from us. That such has been the result, is well known to many of us, and ought seriously to engage the attention of the Government. It would almost appear that the Government had taken this view of the case. It is at least evident that Government officials are not very strict in the enforcement of the law. Yet, in view of the legislation of the Imperial Parliament on this matter, it is important that so long as the present law stands it should be enforced strictly. My object in making the present motion is to bring forcibly to the notice of the Government, a most flagrant, open and defiant violation of the law in December last at the port of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. This case is within my own knowledge and observation, and my best efforts strenuously made with the owner of the vessel and the Customs officer, failed in preventing the vessel from going to sea. The vessel was the three masted schooner Zebra, about twenty years old, rotten and leaking, cleared by the Collector of Bridgewater, an adjoining port, bound to the West Indies, said officer giving the captain the usual certificate of proper lading, when in fact the vessel's deck load of lumber was about fourteen inches over and above her main rail. Three of the crew, knowing nothing about the condition of this vessel, shipped at the Custom House in Lunenburg, were conveyed to the vessel lying at Bridgewater, which immediately proceeded to sea. The vessel, after only a few hours out of port, leaked badly, and was then put back into the port of Lunenburg. The three men shipped at Lunenburg then informed the Captain that they would not go in the vessel unless a survey was held, and tendered their monthly advances, which the Captain led them to believe he would accept and release them, but delayed until the day he purposed sailing, and then, under a warrant for desertion, had them arrested and put in jail to await the sailing of the vessel. They sent for me, and on hearing their complaint I went for them to the Custom House officer who had shipped them, where I met the Captain, and also the owner of the vessel, and in their presence

stated the seamen's grievances, which were not contradicted, the Custom's officer stating that he had seen the vessel, that she had twelve inches of lumber above the rail, and that he had already notified the Captain and owner of the difficulties and penalties they were under. The seamen then made formal complaints, and had the necessary steps taken to have a survey of the vessel. But before enquiry could be had, the Captain, with the owner and protective officer of the port, endeavoured to take the seamen by force on board the vessel, and would have succeeded had not the populace interfered to prevent it, and the jail was set on fire. Yet notwithstanding all this, the vessel was permitted—yes, sanctioned—by the Custom House officer to leave the port without his clearance, therefore without reducing the deck load and without a survey, the Captain even taking the poor sailors' clothes with him. In a case of this kind it is the duty of the Government not only to make strict enquiry, but to make an example of the parties thus grossly violating a law established in the interest of protecting life and property. I would like to know if any correspondence has come to the Government in this matter. I ought to say, in justice to the officer of the port of Lunenburg, that I do not believe that he intentionally erred, although he ought to have better known his duty.

Hon. Mr. WILMOT—The point on which I opposed the Bill when it was before the House last session was that it would drive a very considerable amount of the carrying trade of the Maritime Provinces to Bangor and Portland, United States, and it has had that effect. It was entirely in accord with the opinion expressed by the Board of Trade of Great Britain that it would be necessary, if that law was to be carried out, that there should be co-operation on the part of the United States with the people of Canada in order to make it effectual. As the law now stands it is simply turning away our carrying trade into the hands of the Americans. I remember the division on the Bill was very close, and the consequences of its operations are exactly what we predicted at the time. I suppose there are the same objections against Mr. Plimsoll's Bill in the British Parliament, under which I have known several cases of extraordinary hardship, where foreign vessels are allowed to carry 150 tons more load than Colonial vessels of the same class. I am very desirous to protect our seamen, yet the