

will cause the enquiry to be made which I have asked for. This is a matter, perhaps, which does not affect many members in this House, but it affects materially many of my constituents, and it is a matter which deserves the consideration of the Government. If the Government have been led away by misrepresentations in granting the concessions which the Mackenzie Administration declined to grant, I hope those concessions will be withdrawn. As matters stood under the late Minister of Customs, everything that could be desired for the protection of life and property was granted, and it would be very unsatisfactory to those interested and to the Canadian marine to have any further concessions or indulgences granted to United States' wrecking vessels in Canadian waters, without something being granted to our vessel owners beyond the mere privilege of being allowed to rescue wrecks in our own waters.

Mr. PLUMB. The question that has been brought forward by the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Patterson) is entitled to the serious consideration of the House. My hon. friend has truly stated that the question does not interest directly a large portion of the members of this House, but he has also stated truly that it interests directly the whole Canadian commerce. It is a very great question, in which the respective rights of the Provinces and of the United States are directly interested, and it is one, of course, which we can approach without prejudice to the question which may arise between the two Governments, and we can state the position in which we are, and ask for the judgment of the House and the opinion of the Government on the subject. It is well known that, whether by the authority of the American Government or not, the most extraordinary regulations have been made to protect the American wrecking vessels on the one side, and to exclude our wrecking vessels on the other. I know a case where a vessel in extreme peril was rescued by a Canadian tug, and that tug was seized, I think, in the Detroit River and subjected to a heavy fine for doing what was an act of mercy, and for which she should have been rewarded, rather than mulcted. It is, of course, obvious that it is impossible for any wrecking arrangements to be made, which shall have vessels at all points where wrecks may possibly happen, that can rescue property, and the only possible service which these people can perform, is the salvage of property, not the saving of life. It is well known that during the great stress of weather, under which wrecks occur, it is almost impossible to bring any vessel, no matter how well manned, to the immediate succor of the vessel in distress. An efficient company, with good appliances, on this side of the border, should have every possible encouragement, and I believe it is intended that, before this Session is concluded, a Bill shall be introduced to charter companies of that kind. I have no doubt that the service can be made perfectly efficient, provided the incorporators have the protection of the Government, which, I think, they have a right to expect, for I think they have a preferential right within the jurisdiction of Canada to perform their services upon the lakes over which Canada has control. This last season has been especially prolific in accidents, showing that an efficient service of that kind is required. I do not think in the history of the commerce of the lakes there has been such extensive disasters accompanied by such a loss of life and property, as have occurred within the last two or three months upon Lakes Erie and Ontario. All these disasters warn us that there should be a system adopted which would encourage Canadians with the necessary capital to combine for carrying on a very meritorious and important service connected with their inland commerce. I think the House is under the greatest obligation to the hon. member for Essex for bringing this matter before us. I trust a discussion on this subject will take place, and that those gentlemen who are practically acquainted with the subject, those whose residence on the great inland waters have led

them to investigate the subject, will follow up this discussion, so that we may be enabled to know the difficulties which have heretofore attended the formation of a Canadian company, and be able to judge of the pressing importance of the case which has been presented by the hon. member for Essex. Residing, as I do, upon the borders of one of the great lakes; knowing, as I do, the constant necessity for a wrecking organization; knowing, as I do, that as long as we are hampered in the way we are, and as long as it is claimed that the necessity in regard to matters of this kind is like that jug-handled reciprocity of which we used to hear in days gone by—all on one side—just so long we shall be prevented from doing what we ought to do in the way of organizing companies to perform this kind of service. The interference of wreckers from the other side is altogether accidental; they are not bound to come; they come when it is their interest to come, and they stay away when they can employ themselves better otherwise. I trust that these associations—there are one or two very good ones, I believe, on Lake Erie—will be encouraged to continue their work, to enlarge their capital, and to do the kind of service efficiently for which they were created; and I commend to the careful attention of the House the remarks which were made by my hon. friend from Essex (Mr. Patterson), and I think that as this discussion proceeds, it will be found that he had the strongest grounds for presenting this motion to the House, and that it will meet with that careful attention, which any practical subject is sure to receive from the practical representatives of the people assembled here to-night.

Mr. McCALLUM. This is not a new subject in this House. Since the late Government issued instructions to guide the Customs-house officers on the inland waters of this Dominion, the American newspapers have published articles in the attempt, by bluster, to induce the Government to give way on this question. They tell us that the Canadian vessels are not fit to do the work; but they do not particularize. If they cannot mention any case in which life or property has been lost in the inland waters of this Dominion, through the inability of Canadian tug owners to perform the work they undertake to do, I think it is high time they should stop this cry. They also raised the cry that men were saving life in American waters. I know of no law, Canadian or otherwise, that punishes a man for saving life or for saving a vessel, in distress. But there is a law, and they have enforced it in the United States, prohibiting foreign or Canadian vessels from saving wrecked vessels on American shores; and for years the Americans had the whole inland waters of this country as a preserve for themselves. The Canadian Government allowed them to do the work for years, while Americans would not allow Canadians to do the same in their waters. To say that to allow Canadians to go into their waters is an equivalent, is absurd, because ninety out of every hundred wrecks occur in Canadian waters. If they are in earnest, let them throw open the coasting trade of the United States, but if not, let them give our tugs the privilege to tow from one port to another. If they do that, the Canadians are able to take care of themselves; and if they will not, I ask the Government to protect the Canadians. The Customs officers of this country are too lenient in this matter, and it is high time they should be looked after. Why, Mr. Evarts in Congress said, that the highest official of the Canadian Government was controlled by a Canadian wrecking ring. Very complimentary to the high officials of the Canadian Government! It is said the American Government passed an Act of Congress on this question. I would ask hon. gentlemen to scan that Act closely. If my memory serves me, there were two Acts passed in Congress at the same time: one offered reciprocity to the Canadians, the other prohibited towing in the waters of the United States; so that, taking the two together, they