

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. That subject is now occupying the attention of the Government.

Mr. INNES asked, Is it the intention of the Government, in view of the recent bank failures, to make any amendments to the General Banking Act this Session, or otherwise to have such legislation as will secure a more effective system of supervision and inspection for the chartered banks, more correct certified monthly returns, and generally for the better security of those whose money is invested in such institutions, as depositors or otherwise?

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I must give the same answer as I did to the previous question.

VESSELS WRECKED ON THE GREAT LAKES.

Mr. DAWSON moved for:

Return showing the number of Canadian vessels lost or wrecked on the great lakes during the past season of navigation; also the number of lives lost in the case of each wreck; also a statement showing what, if any, steps have been taken to ascertain the cause of loss in each case.

He said: In making this motion I do not wish to put the Department to the trouble of giving any very lengthened report. All I should like to see would be a synopsis, something short, which would not occasion a very great deal of work in the Department, and still give the information required. Some years ago I drew attention to the great number of wrecks and losses that had occurred on the great lakes. Within a short time there had been no less than twelve large vessels lost, with a very large loss of life. In one case no less than 200 lives were lost, in another case 25 lives, in another five lives, in another 30 or 40 lives, and so on. The actual loss of life during that period could not be ascertained, but I believe that no less than 300 lives were lost in the waters of Algoma by the wreck of vessels. At that time I drew the attention of the Government to the necessity that existed for some mode of inspection, and I am happy to say that legislation took place which had a very good effect. Inspectors were appointed to examine the hulls. Before that there were only inspectors to examine the machinery. Hull inspectors were appointed, with the result that a great many of the unseaworthy vessels have been prevented from going out. But another set of circumstances has grown up since. The demand for vessels on the lakes for the last few years has been very great. The shipping on the lakes has largely increased, and the rates of freight have been so good that transportation has become remunerative where it scarcely paid at all before. The consequence is that a great many old hulks have been brought into use; vessels that had been for years under water have been raised and sent to the docks for repairs. While these vessels are being repaired, I think it is highly necessary that the hull inspector should examine them and see that they are well repaired and put in proper order. Now, Sir, as I understand, there are at this moment, in the docks and in the shipyards throughout Ontario—of course, I only speak of the lake marine, not of ocean vessels at all—there are now undergoing repairs in the various harbors and docks of Ontario, vessels that have been under water for years. The hull inspector was asked to visit them and make a report; he answered that he had no instructions to do so, and that no provision was made towards paying his expenses. Now, if I may be permitted to suggest a remedy, I think there should be some legislation which would prevent vessels from being sent out which were either overloaded or unseaworthy. The sending out of overloaded vessels is a common thing in Ontario. Old schooners are converted into barges, and these are put in tow of steamers, and the consequence is that when stormy weather comes on, they are cut loose from the steamers, and very often go to the bottom. Now, there was a case in

Ontario this year. A vessel called the *Oriental*, that was considered unseaworthy, was repaired to a certain extent so as just to be able to float. The register of this vessel was 375 tons. She was to be sent across the lake in tow of another vessel, loaded with 700 tons of coal, and, as the report is, she had only a few inches of what the sailors call "free board," that is, the space between the deck and the surface of the water. A storm came on, the steamer left her, and she cast anchor, as a matter of course, and soon went down with all on board. That is not a solitary case. There have been similar cases in Lake Superior. A vessel called the *Jane Hurlburt*, which was unseaworthy and had been used for carrying firewood, was sent out in tow of a steamer, in the fall of the year, to take a number of men down the lake coast. Encountering somewhat stormy weather, this vessel became unmanageable, as she had neither sail nor oar, nor a man on board who could manage her. When the storm came on, the captain of the steamer, in order to save his own vessel, cut the rope by which this vessel was attached to the steamer, and in a few minutes she went down with thirty people on board, all of them strangers in the country, poor navvies who were seeking for work. Sir, I could repeat a great many similar instances. The cause leading to all these accidents is the desire of making money by carrying freight, and these rotten old hulks are patched up and put in tow of old steamers. Now, a case occurred in Lake Superior this year. A vessel, or rather a barge, as those vessels are called, named the *Bessie Barwick*, was put in tow of a steamer, and a storm coming on, she was out adrift in Lake Superior, but, fortunately, she made the shore without loss of life. Again, we have the loss of the *California*, a Canadian vessel, in the Straits of Mackinaw. This vessel was evidently overloaded with wheat, and, in addition, carried no less than 700 barrels of pork as a deckload. Consequently, when she began to roll in the sea, the barrels of pork rolled to one side, and she reeled and sank. On that occasion I think some 13 or 14 lives were lost, and some were saved. I could repeat a good many more instances of the same kind, but what I wish to call attention to is that there should be some legislation which would enable the Government to appoint officials who would prevent vessels from going out either overloaded or in an unseaworthy condition. Now, I think that this duty might be performed at the different ports by Custom house officers. Any man can tell when a vessel is overloaded, and if the Custom house officer at any port saw a barge overloaded in tow of a steamer, he should have power to say, "You shall not go out in that condition and in this weather, because it is not safe. If there was some power of that sort given to the collectors of the different ports, I think the difficulty would be met; but at present the demand for vessels is so great that I am afraid that, during the coming season, unless something is done, the losses will be repeated on a far larger scale than hitherto. The Department of Marine has done a great deal for the lake navigation. We have had a hydrographic survey going on from year to year; rocks and shoals have been discovered which were never dreamed of, some of which, very probably, led to losses on former occasions. Perhaps the *Wabuno* struck on one of these rocks, and the *Asia* may have struck one of them. In the case of the *Wabuno*, not a single soul was saved; in that of the *Asia*, two got ashore. This hydrographic survey is doing an immense deal of good. I think, however, that the Department of Marine should take this matter up and provide means of inspecting vessels, as to how loaded, before they leave port, and should also give authority to someone at each and all of the different ports to prevent vessels from going out when in an unseaworthy condition, or too heavily laden. I may mention that in the United States they are no better off than we are. On the other side of the lakes a great many losses