

foundland, is now exempt from the operation of this Act, and does not require to have a master or mate possessing a certificate either of competency or service, as it was not considered advisable to compel vessels engaged in such voyages which might be termed coasting voyages, to have certificated officers at the commencement of the system, until a sufficient supply of such officers could be obtained, but I am of opinion, in the course of a few years when there will be a larger supply than at present of certificated officers for the mercantile marine, that vessels engaged in our sea-going coasting trade, which is very extensive, should also be compelled to have at least one certificated officer on board, which would probably be the means of preventing many of the disasters to our coasting vessels, which are but too common on our shores, and which I regret to say are too frequently attended with fatal results.

I am also of opinion that very many of the disasters which happen to our coasters, result from the defective state of such vessels, as regards their hulls, outfit and ground tackle, and I feel confident that many of the wrecks which take place on our shores might be avoided if there was some kind of Government classification, rendered compulsory on all our Canadian shipping, which would require all vessels registered in Canada, to be surveyed and classed by Government Inspectors, something similar to the system now in operation with reference to our steamers, and which has tended to make life and property on board steam vessels in Canada, much more safe and secure than if no Government inspection existed.

Heavy deck loads and overloading have in my opinion tended in past years to swell our list of marine disasters, and it is the opinion of many persons engaged in seafaring pursuits, that until some Government inspection and classification is established, and heavy deck loads prevented, the casualties of the North American trade will still continue, and overloaded vessels with heavy deck loads will become unmanageable, property will be lost, and valuable lives will be sacrificed.

The feeling existing among many shipowners, however, is that any Government supervision over their vessels either as regards their quality or the quantity of their cargo should be left entirely to the shipowner and the underwriters, who are most interested in the matter, and that any Government interference would only increase their expenses and diminish their profits, losing sight of the fact that the crews of these vessels, who, when they are shipped, have not generally the means of ascertaining the actual condition of the vessel on board of which they have to sail, and whose lives are frequently lost on account of some defect in the vessel or outfit, or on account of her being overloaded with too much deckload.

The Government may expend large amounts of the public revenue, as Canada has done, in erecting and maintaining expensive lighthouses and steam fog-whistles on her shores, but unless Government supervision is exercised over the qualifications of the men in charge of our mercantile marine, and a proper inspection and classification of our vessels required, and overloading prevented, serious disasters will still continue to take place in our waters, and loss of life and property will thereby ensue.

Not only would it tend, in my opinion, to the safety of life and property if our