

should be used for other purposes, but if you charge up the cost of the building of the hospitals erected plus the cost of the administration, I am advised by the officials of the department that the amount to which my hon. friend has referred will be more than absorbed, because this covers a period of over fifty years. That being the case, this is a question not of increased cost of administration, but of increased cost of hospital treatment. We have to pay increased rates in hospitals throughout the country.

Mr. STEVENS: What are the additional charges which are not included in this report? What is the amount?

Mr. ROWELL: I have not had figured out the whole cost of administration since Confederation. There has been a staff of three or four and there is their travelling expenses. It has been suggested to me that the amount would perhaps depend on the period. I presume the amount was not as great in the early years, when the work was small, as later; it might run from \$5,000 to \$7,000 or \$8,000 a year, but it is a sum which will absorb the surplus according to my information from the responsible officers connected with the administration. Hospital charges have, as every one knows, increased during the war period, and we have to pay a higher rate than we had to pay two or three years ago in order to secure fair treatment in hospitals for the sick mariners. The whole question is this—shall the shipowners pay the cost of caring for these sick mariners in the hospitals, or shall the country bear part of the burden? I believe the shipowners have made, during the war, sufficient profits to enable them to pay the whole cost of maintenance of these sick mariners. In view of the desire to economize and not to spend money needlessly, it is only fair that we should expect the shipowners to pay the whole cost of caring for these sick mariners in hospitals. My hon. friend says that some other countries do not impose this charge. That is true; but that is no reason why we, who have been caring for sick mariners for fifty years, should not continue to do so. This is of great advantage to the fishing vessels on the coasts of the Maritime Provinces. I am told so by men interested in the situation, and I would think it would be of the same advantage on the British Columbia coast, although I have not been informed as to that, because wherever a fishing vessel chooses to pay the fee, and the fees are

small, it gets the benefit of treatment for the mariners on the vessel, and that is of great value to these vessels. Under the Act the Government is obligated to take care of and provide treatment for a period as long as a year in the case of these sick mariners.

One word with reference to the situation as to the United States. I should point out to my hon. friend with reference to the clause he read from the American Act that the United States was only entitled to impose that tax against us if we imposed a discriminatory tax against them. This is not a discriminatory tax against the United States. It applies to our own vessels, it applies to English vessels—to all vessels entering our ports that come within the terms of the Act. It does not apply, as my hon. friend has said, to vessels of Ontario plying on inland waters or going from Ontario to the province of Quebec.

Mr. STEVENS: Does not my hon. friend know that the American Government imposed this tax of 6 cents against Canadian vessels because of this particular tax?

Mr. ROWELL: I believe my hon. friend is right that the American Government has imposed it. It is a matter which I am having the Department of Justice look into, and if the view which I entertain is confirmed that there is no just ground for its imposition, then we will make representations to the American Government. But this is not a new thing. As a matter of fact I turned up the record, and I find by memoranda on file in the department that as far back as 1891 ship-owners of Canada were opposing this tax on the very same grounds as my hon. friend has set out to-day. But what I point out is that it makes absolutely no difference, so far as the operation of the American law is concerned, whether this tax is 1½ cents or 2 cents. It is the fact of its existence at all that makes the United States impose their tax against our shipping. The whole question is, shall we impose on the country part of the financial obligation for caring for these sick mariners? The policy in the past has been to ask ship-owners to provide for the care of their own sick. That is the policy embodied in the Bill. The Government has considered it, and it thinks the Bill should go through.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time, and the House went into Committee thereon, Mr. Boivin in the Chair.

On section 383—duty on all vessels arriving at certain ports.