

Canada Shipping Act Amendment Discussed in House of Commons.

The Minister of Marine, Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, on Mar. 12, moved that the House of Commons go into committee on the following proposed resolution: "Resolved that it is expedient to repeal the Canada Shipping Act, Revised Statutes of Canada 1906, chap. 113, secs. 85 to 89, both inclusive, and sec. 91, and to re-enact in lieu thereof as follows: 1. That every British subject who—(a) served as a master or mate of a seagoing or coasting sailing vessel of over 75 tons, gross tonnage, before Jan. 1, 1920, for a full period of 12 months within 10 years immediately next preceding the date of his application for certificate of service, (b) produces satisfactory evidence of his sobriety, experience, ability and general good conduct on board ship, and (c) passes the sight test and the prescribed examination in signalling, shall be entitled, on payment of the prescribed fee, to a certificate of service as a master or mate of a square rigged or fore-and-aft rigged sea-going or coasting sailing vessel not exceeding 750 tons, registered tonnage, according as his service has been (a) as master or as mate, (b) on a sea-going or on a coasting sailing vessel, (c) on a square rigged sailing ship or on a fore-and-aft rigged sailing vessel. 2. That in every such certificate of service the name, place and date of birth of the person to whom the same is issued shall be stated, and each certificate shall specify whether the holder is entitled to act as master or mate, whether the certificate is for sea-going vessels or for vessels in the coasting trade, and whether for square rigged sailing vessels or for fore-and-aft sailing vessels, and that it is not for any vessel exceeding 750 tons, registered tonnage.

The proposed resolution was discussed as follows:

D. D. McKenzie, M.P. for North Cape Breton and Victoria, N. S.: "Legislation very much akin to what is aimed at by this resolution was introduced in the latter part of one of the sessions last year by the member for Halifax (Hon. A. K. Maclean), but it met with such vigorous opposition from members, including myself, that the acting minister thought proper to withdraw the bill. Now the Minister of Marine comes forward with a resolution, not exactly word for word, but on almost precisely the same lines as the legislation introduced last year. We all know that a certain standard of education, experience and ability is required of professional men in this country. In the case of lawyers, doctors, engineers, or any other professional men, certain educational requirements have to be met, and certain experience must have been had before they are permitted to practice. I venture to say that captaincy and charge of ships has been regarded not merely as a profession in this country, but as a very honorable and very onerous profession for the last hundred years and more. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries now brings before this Parliament legislation that would do away entirely with educational requirements in the case of a man whose duty it is to take charge of a ship. According to this resolution, if a man obtained a certificate 10 years ago stating that he had served on board ship for 12 months somewhere in Canada, now, after the lapse of that time, during which he may

have done anything else and may have forgotten all about seamanship, he can claim a license as a captain qualified to put to sea with a crew. The sections in the Revised Statutes of Canada, chap. 113, and also secs. 85 to 89 inclusive, are very simple in their requirements, and are not, I think, too exacting. If this proposed legislation were restricted to coasting ships there would not be so much danger. But it is also contemplated to license such men as I have mentioned to go across the ocean. What would happen to such a captain if he went to Liverpool? He might take his ship there, but he would never be able to leave, because his certificate would be regarded as a mere scrap of paper. He would have to show a certificate recognized on the other side by the Board of Trade. It is possible that the minister may have consulted the English Board of Trade and obtained its approval of the bill. If he has not done so, I fear that the captains who might possess these unsatisfactory certificates would find themselves in difficulty in the old country. We know of instances in which engineers have gone from Canada to the old country, with certificates that were good enough here, but were rejected on the other side, and in this predicament competent engineers had to be secured to clear the ships of the ports in England. I earnestly submit that in order to take charge of an ocean ship a man must have adequate knowledge of seafaring and be able to ascertain his position by the use of the proper instruments. So far as I am concerned, I desire it to be distinctly understood that I repudiate any responsibility that might accrue by the enacting of such legislation as this, for I think it is a most dangerous thing to put life and property in the hands of incompetent captains. The insurance companies of this country, I think, would refuse to insure ships or cargoes intended to be sent to sea under the control of men who were palpably incompetent in every sense, at least in the matter of training. The minister was not in the house when the bill to which I have made reference was introduced. If he had been, he would recall that both our own law and the English law on the subject were cited, and that after due consideration of the facts the member who introduced the bill deemed it wise to withdraw it. I am therefore surprised that within such a short time the minister should seek to establish such a low standard of seamanship in this country. In conclusion, I can only emphasize my protest and leave the responsibility entirely with the minister and those who may be disposed to implement this resolution by an act of Parliament."

Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, Minister of Marine, said: "I was not present at the special session of the house when the then acting minister introduced the bill in question, which was not similar to, but different from this. That bill applied to sailing ships propelled by auxiliary power, but this resolution does not apply to such ships. It applies only to sailing ships of a certain tonnage. Under the Shipping Act any master who served on a sailing ship prior to 1870, if he were alive today, and were sober, experienced and of adequate ability and general good conduct, would be entitled to a certi-

cate on the payment of the prescribed fee. The member for North Cape Breton will at once realize that we could not expect men to be fit captains of sailing ships who had served prior to 1870, and this resolution seeks to repeal sec. 85 of the Shipping Act, and to enact that any man who has served on a sailing vessel for 12 months within the past 10 years and possesses the qualifications to which I have referred, in addition to a knowledge of signalling, shall be granted a service certificate. This is nothing new. We are merely bringing the Shipping Act up to date, and it is difficult for me to apprehend the reasoning of the member for North Cape Breton and Victoria in his argument that the legislation proposed is unusual and hazardous. I wish to say to him that the service certificate that shall be granted to an officer who desires to become a master of a sailing ship, should this resolution and the bill that is to be based upon it pass, is a service certificate that will be recognized just the same as a competency certificate. There is absolutely no difference so far as recognition by the English authorities is concerned between the service certificate and the competency certificate.

"With regard to the other clause, I wish to have sec. 86 of the act repealed also because a mate cannot obtain a service certificate without going back as far as 1883. Surely members will not object to the changes that the resolution calls for, in order that both a master and a mate, instead of having to go back to 1870 for the master, and 1883 for the mate, may, upon a service of 10 years be capable of obtaining a service certificate. During the last few years captains and mates of sailing ships have become very scarce; in fact, they were so difficult to get that during the war I had to take the necessary authority under the War Measures Act to grant service certificates to masters and mates of sailing ships. My object in bringing forward this resolution now is to meet the absolute necessity that exists for more masters and mates, by enabling them to get service certificates for sailing ships. The act introduced at the special session of the house was for sailing ships driven by auxiliary power. This resolution is confined to sailing craft only. There is another section of the Shipping Act—sec. 87—that I desire to have repealed. It provides that a ship shall be only 100 registered tons and not over 150. The resolution stipulates that the tonnage may be increased to 750 tons. The member from North Cape Breton comes from a maritime province, and I am sure that he appreciates better than I do the fact that those experienced men who have been on sailing ships for a number of years, while they may not be able, owing to lack of education, to pass the competency test, and therefore obtain competency certificates, are just as good men and just as competent, providing that their eyesight is all right and that they understand signalling, as others who may be better equipped as far as education goes. But we cannot put men on sailing ships who are 70 years of age. I therefore wish to repeal the clause so as to provide that masters and mates who have served, within the past 10 years, for 12 months on board a sailing ship