

*House Bill No. 4663, as amended by the Committee.*

A BILL to place the American Merchant Marine engaged in the Foreign Trade upon an Equality with that of other Nations.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That on and after the passage of this Act there shall be paid, out of any moneys in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, to any vessel of more than five hundred tons gross register, whether sail or steam, constructed in and wholly owned by citizens of the United States, and registered pursuant to the laws of the United States, and which shall be engaged in the foreign trade, plying between the ports of the United States and foreign ports, the sum of fifteen cents per gross registered ton for the first five hundred miles or fraction thereof sailed outward, and the same sum for the first five hundred miles or fraction thereof sailed inward, on any voyage or voyages; fifteen cents per gross registered ton for the second five hundred miles or fraction thereof sailed outward, and the same sum for the second five hundred miles or fraction thereof sailed inward; and thirty cents per gross registered ton for each thousand miles thereafter, and *pro rata* for any distance sailed less than one thousand miles after the first thousand miles sailed: Provided that payment shall not be made for more than seven thousand miles sailed on either an outward or inward voyage, and that the foreign port to which the voyage is made shall be distant more than seventy miles seaward from the ocean or gulf boundary of the United States; and such payments to any vessel as aforesaid shall be paid to the owner or owners thereof upon proof of the distance actually sailed, the distance to be ascertained and the payment to be made under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury shall prescribe and promulgate; distances between ports to be determined by measurements, which shall be furnished by the United States Hydrographic Office to the Bureau of Navigation. The payments at the rate of thirty cents per ton for each one thousand miles sailed, as herein provided, shall continue for the term of ten years at that rate, and thereafter for another term of nine years at a reduction of three cents per ton each year upon each one thousand miles sailed, and *pro rata* for any less distance.

Section 2. That no vessel shall be entitled to the benefits of this Act except such vessels whose entire cargo shall be loaded at a port or ports of the United States and discharged at one or more foreign ports, or whose entire cargo shall be loaded at one or more foreign ports and discharged at a port or ports in the United States; nor shall a vessel be entitled to receive payment under this Act unless it shall have freight on board at the time of sailing to the amount, in tons weight or measurement, of at least twenty-five per cent. of the net register tonnage, two thousand two hundred and forty pounds, or forty cubic feet, to make a ton of cargo.

Section 3. That no vessel shall be entitled to the benefits of this Act unless all the officers thereof shall be citizens of the United States, in conformity with the existing laws; nor unless upon each departure from the United States the following proportion of the crew shall be citizens of the United States, to wit: During the first two years this Act shall be in force, one-sixth thereof; during the next three succeeding years, one-third thereof; and during the remaining term of this Act, at least one-half thereof; nor unless there be carried on vessels of less than one thousand tons gross register one native-born apprentice, and on vessels of one thousand tons and upward one such apprentice for each thousand tons or three-fourths fraction thereof.

Section 4. That to owners of vessels already built, payments under this Act shall be made for such time only as each shall stand inspection and hold character, if wood-built, not lower than the second grade (A1½), in a scale of six grades, in the "Record of American and Foreign Shipping," or the corresponding classification in any other incorporated American register of shipping that has or shall have the unqualified indorsements of the Boards of Marine Underwriters of New Orleans (Louisiana), New York (New York), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Boston (Massachusetts), and San Francisco (California). If iron- or steel-built, payments shall be made for such time only as each vessel shall stand inspection and hold character, not lower than the second class (A1, thirteen years), in "The Record of American and Foreign Shipping," or the corresponding classification in any other incorporated American register of shipping that has or shall have the unqualified indorsements of the Boards of Underwriters of New Orleans (Louisiana), New York (New York), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Boston (Massachusetts), and San Francisco (California).

Section 5. That vessels keel-laid and built after the passage of this Act, in order to be entitled to payments after losing or lapsing from class in the first grade if wood-built or from the first class or division if iron- or steel-built, must have been so well constructed as to have been classed originally in the highest grade of the first class, or first division, to wit: If wood-built, A1, twelve years; and if iron- or steel-built, A1, sixteen years, in "The Record of American and Foreign Shipping," or the corresponding classification in any other incorporated American register of shipping that has or shall have the unqualified indorsements of the Boards of Marine Underwriters of New Orleans (Louisiana), New York (New York), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Boston (Massachusetts), and San Francisco (California); the foregoing classification to be subject to the approval of the Bureau of Navigation, in the discretion of the Secretary of the Treasury. Vessels so built and classed for the highest character shall receive payments as in section four provided for vessels already built. Vessels unclassified in the register named in this Act, or in an American register whose rules for building and inspection are fully equal in requirements, and all vessels whose class has expired, or been suspended or withdrawn, shall be disentitled to payments while this disqualification exists.

Section 6. That the Government of the United States shall have the prior right, during the time this Act shall be in force, to purchase or charter any vessels receiving the benefits of this Act at a price to be fixed by agreement with their owners or agents, or by the judgment of appraisers, mutually selected in case of disagreement.