

under this Act the owner or owners of which receive any other compensation from the Government of the United States for carrying the United States mails; but the owner or owners of any vessel or vessels of the United States now under contract to carry the mails of the United States may apply to the Postmaster-General to be released from such contract; and on such application the Postmaster-General shall thereupon cause such contract to be terminated and cancelled.

Sec. 15. That all Acts and parts of Acts inconsistent with or superseded by the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed.

The following considerations are submitted in respect of the Bill to promote the commerce and increase the foreign trade of the United States, and to provide auxiliary cruisers, transports, and seamen for Government use when necessary:—

The fundamental and principal reason and purpose of the United States aiding and encouraging our own shipping—helping to create it when it does not exist to the extent necessary to the defence and advancement of our just interests, and promoting its capacity to carry our surplus productions of every kind to the countries and peoples that need or wish them, as well as to add to the strength of the nation in times (often coming suddenly) when our power and immediate means of self-defence may be taxed to the utmost—are stated in the preamble of the Bill. If the preamble is true, the necessity for legislation of this character is demonstrated, unless it be shown that our present condition is due to the fault of American shipbuilders and shipowners, or to the paying of too high wages by manufacturers and others employing the labour of our people. It will scarcely be pretended that either of these alternatives exists. The condition of our commerce during many years is shown in the very instructive report of the Commissioner of Navigation for 1897 and 1898, and also in the report of the Secretary of the Treasury for 1898.

From these reports and other Government documents it definitely appears (a state of things long well known in all the productive and business circles of the country) that our exports have not kept pace with the increase of our population or with the increase of our productive resources and power in producing food and food-products, and in the production of manufacturing industries of all kinds which convert the raw material of our country into higher and more valuable forms, and thus find a necessary field of employment for the intelligence, scientific and mechanical skill, and enterprise of our citizens. The larger this field is the greater is the capacity of our citizens to utilise and enjoy the products of the farm and the shop, and thereby to enlarge and make profitable the home markets as well as the foreign ones for everything that is produced or manufactured. It scarcely need be said that the home market is one of the principal and great essentials to the prosperity of any nation which possesses the abundant and almost universal natural resources of those possessed by the United States. It means the co-operation and mutual assistance of all the people in the development and increase of all their industrial energies. The full fruit of this development and increase must be found in our increasing our exportations of all our products and manufactures to every part of the globe where purchasers of them can be found. Such has been the wise and profitable policy of all the nations possessing in any considerable degree the natural or artificial resources necessary to these ends. Such nations have done this steadily and persistently, and have by subsidies and various other aids to their commercial and shipping interests, such as exploiting corporations for foreign trade, and by trading posts, banking facilities, &c., obtained great advantages over the producers, manufacturers, and the shipping interests of the United States.

It is an obvious truth that the volume of the foreign trade of any nation is very largely influenced and increased by the fact that its own ships are the means of its communication and trade. Their influence on all the agencies of such a trade is naturally and properly directed to the development and increase of the trade of their own country. And so, while the United States have slept or been indifferent to these considerations, the trade with and markets of most of the nations using such things as the producing and manufacturing nations have to sell have fallen to and been absorbed by others than the United States.

The great bulk of our export trade must depend upon shipping. No theory or doctrine of protection or free-trade, no theory or doctrine of finance or currency, can affect the fact that our only means of communication and intercourse with more than 90 per cent. of all the inhabitants of the globe is shipping. In order that the United States can fairly compete with other nations in the markets beyond the seas, it is essential that our means of communication and intercourse with the buying nations should be put under the protection of our own flag, and on a footing of equality at least with our competitors. In the present condition of national affairs and trade in those parts of the globe where perhaps the largest opening for the trade of ourselves and our competitors will exist in the future the most efficacious means to these ends must be adopted.

It is an unpleasant fact that at the present time more than 85 per cent. of the foreign commerce of the United States is conducted by means of foreign ships, and not only with the countries under whose flag such ships sail, but with other countries having little or no ocean marine, the result of which is, as above suggested, that there is a constant, powerful, and successful influence exerted in favour of the productions and manufactures of the country whose flag is borne by the trading ship, and by all the accessories of Government aids and of mercantile and financial influences in the ports and countries to which such ships go. If we are not speedily to endeavour by every just means to obtain a fair and equal footing in the foreign markets referred to, and not to abandon them to our competitors, whose wise and just policy for their own good maintains at every cost necessary to success their shipping intercourse and the facilities and aids that necessarily flow from it, we must speedily adopt a corresponding policy, and by the most liberal inducements rehabilitate our merchant marine, and try by every fair means to regain the position we once occupied, and which we ought to occupy in the future. Such a course of policy does not chiefly rest upon the idea of helping the shipbuilding and ship-sailing interests of the United States