

on their own account, but upon the element—common to all our productive and manufacturing industries—of their being one of the essential co-operating means of general prosperity and welfare. The main thing is to enable the producing and all other industries of the United States to regain our just position in the markets of the world. There is no honest and industrious worker in the manifold fields of labour in the United States who is not concerned in such an undertaking. The labouring-man can only have house and home and food and clothing for himself and his family in proportion to the employment of and compensation for his labour; and his employer can only pay him by the advantageous sale of the things produced. All these considerations are truisms in the theory of the State, which is little more than an establishment for the co-operation, organized by law, of its citizens in all things relating to the safety and prosperity of all.

That American natural resources, capacity, and enterprise cannot be excelled by those of the people of any other country may be asserted without presumption. And yet, in the face of this, the foreign commerce conducted by our own shipping has decreased from 80 per cent. in 1846 and 66 per cent. in 1860 to 11 per cent. in 1897. Other manufacturing nations, influenced by the considerations before stated, have aided in shipbuilding and in establishing and supporting lines of sea-connection under their own flags with distant countries, and have thereby enabled their own citizens to establish trading-houses, banking-houses, and other facilities for the sale of their productions in those countries; and they have thus, in a very large degree, secured a comparatively exclusive market for their own goods. Besides this, the cost of their shipping, owing to prices of labour and so forth being generally lower than those paid in the United States, has been considerably and sometimes very much less than that of ships built in the United States.

The result of all these circumstances has been to deprive the United States of the supremacy, or at least the equality, in foreign trade which it had in earlier days, and to very greatly retard the sale of American goods in these far-away countries in which the products of the industry of the United States ought to have an equal opportunity for disposition. It may well be repeated in this connection that by just so much as the export trade of the United States is increased will the industries and labours of our own people be benefited. To regain a trade once lost or greatly curtailed requires extraordinary and persistent effort and expense. Once regained, it can support itself under equal conditions.

It is a well-known fact that the largest markets of the world not already well developed are to be sought for and found in Eastern Asia. These markets are convenient of access from our Pacific coast, and will be almost equally so from our Atlantic coast when the canal crossing the Isthmus of Nicaragua shall have been built under the auspices of the United States.

It is obvious that the struggle of certain nations for political and military supremacy and spheres of influence in Eastern Asia, as well as in Africa, has been and is, with perhaps a single exception, founded upon a desire to obtain a dominating influence over the markets of those regions. In the commerce of those markets the United States ought to have a fair opportunity to compete. This cannot be effectively obtained without our own ships and our own flag. The sooner adequate provision is made to this end the less will be the difficulty and the greater will be our reward. To attain these objects no expense to the common Treasury in aid of shipbuilding and ship-trading can be too great, for the trade, once established, will be permanent; unaided now, it will be lost for a long future.

In view of our existing treaty relations with other countries, it is manifest that the ends before referred to can only be presently and effectively attained by the enactment of a law giving direct aid and encouragement to the increase of our merchant marine, and to the establishment of American lines of communication and trade with foreign markets, and especially with those above referred to.

The substance of the proposed Bill may be stated as follows:—

1. In order to obtain the earliest possible action pursuant to the policy of the United States above referred to, the Bill provides for bringing under our flag and the protection of our laws the few foreign-built ships now actually owned and contracted for by American citizens, and in which and in their trade American capital has been and is actually invested. These ships have been built and their trade established under a foreign flag, because the ships could not be built and fitted out here and operated at a cost that would enable them successfully to compete with the ships and trade of foreigners, aided as they have been, and will continue to be, in various ways by their own Governments.

2. The American registry of these foreign-built ships is conditioned upon their owners building here and putting into our own trade at the earliest practicable time new vessels of a tonnage fairly proportionate to that of the admitted ships.

3. None of these foreign-built ships, or of the new ships so to be built here, are permitted to engage in our coasting trade; but they are permitted to engage in trade with such other ports belonging to the United States as ships under foreign flags are permitted to trade with.

4. All the owners of American trading ships now existing are required to undertake the construction of new tonnage fairly proportioned to that of the ships claiming the benefit of this Act.

5. All these ships are required to carry the mails of the United States free of charge.

6. All the new ships must be built so as to be readily converted into cruisers or other auxiliary aids to the military power of the United States whenever needed for such purposes.

7. When needed, they can be taken or employed by the United States at any time.

8. All these ships are bound (in addition to the indispensable training of their crews) to constantly educate and train American boys for the various necessities of naval operations.

9. All the foregoing-mentioned conditions and requirements being complied with, American vessels are to be aided and assisted in regaining and increasing our trade to distant ports by a compensation graduated (with one exception) upon the distance sailed and upon the size and speed of the ships.