

every one, who wanted to know if something could not be done to keep that yard working during the winter. The difficulty was considerable. The policy of the Government had been declared: No more ships. The appropriation that was made was practically exhausted. Immediately on my return to Ottawa I interviewed the Minister of Marine (Mr. Ballantyne) who at first was like adamant. Not another ship would he build. It was pointed out to him, however, that the situation was critical and that it would be serious to throw out of work men living a thousand miles away from centres of employment. He was shown that these men were struggling to keep up their homes, and so forth; how the cessation in shipbuilding would affect the merchants of that town, as well as other places throughout Canada, and the general result that would ensue. As a business man he saw the proposition in its proper light and gave me one more ship to carry through the winter. This summer that yard is out of employment unless something like this is done. We have heard the hon. member for Three Rivers (Mr. Bureau) explain quite correctly why it is that we can get no foreign orders. When one realizes that the franc to-day is worth a quarter of what it was worth in normal times—as the hon. member for Three Rivers pointed out, it takes twenty-two francs—

Mr. DUFF: Twelve.

Mr. KEEFER:—well, twelve—to buy what heretofore could be bought with five, you can readily understand how it is that foreign orders will not come to this country unless this can be avoided. I think that if by granting one dollar we can get another dollar in addition to that to spend in this country and get security it is very good and sound business.

The objection is offered that the ships may be thrown back on our hands; that they may not be paid for, that freights will fall, that the value of the ships will decrease, and that these ships will be left on the hands of the Government. Well, I wish they were. We have not enough ships to-day in the Canadian Merchant Marine and it would be a very good investment for Canada to get these ships at half cost. To-day we have built and contracted for sixty-three ships; that is not enough to do the business of this Dominion on the Pacific and on the Atlantic coasts. Canada stands in a most remarkable position so far as shipping is concerned. On the East and on the West she reaches out with both arms to the two oceans. Of all

countries, her eastern coast is nearest her western coast on a trip around the world. We have not enough ships to-day to do the business of Canada. We have a destiny ahead of us; we must become a maritime nation.

We have not only the salt water navigation to take care of; we must also look to the interior stretch of navigation on the Great Lakes, and the time is not very far distant when we shall have the seashore of Canada enlarged by many thousands of miles. Some twenty-four hundred miles from Belle Isle straits to the head of lake Superior will soon become accessible to navigation of salt-water ships; and when the canals, the Welland and St. Lawrence, are constructed, eighty per cent of the navigation of the seas will sail these inland lakes coming through these canals, and we shall not have enough ships to carry the produce of the country. What is the situation to-day in the United States? The interior states are suffering from their inability to get produce to the seaports. There is wheat to-day in Kansas grown last year, with this year's wheat also on top of it; and one of the factors of the high cost of living is this inability to get crops out to the seaports. We in Canada so far have not been troubled thus because of our transcontinental routes and the moderate amount of shipping on the Lakes. But the time is coming when, as we grow in population and put more land under cultivation, we shall be choked at the spout unless we have more ships to carry that material away. During the last year or two some of it had to be moved by rail, and even as it is now, transportation by water and breaking bulk at lake Erie ports, it represents six cents a bushel more. It means a great deal to the West if this saving be made and handed to the producers. It also means a great deal to the purchaser of products imported. Even if we had these ships thrown back on our hands for the half of their cost the Government would be much richer as a result of it.

We should have a line of steamers running from the Pacific coast through the Panama canal, stopping, trading and unloading in the West Indies, and going on then loaded to Halifax. We should have another line running from Halifax, doing the same thing, picking up cargoes and taking them through the Panama canal to British Columbia ports. Then we should have railway transportation east and west meeting halfway in connection with this steam-