

shillings per ton for vessels of over 40 tons. Builders and shipbuilding promoters of the present day will smile at the modest character of the bonus offered. Small as the amount now seems to be, it appears to have had a stimulating effect, for we read that a year later, on the 23rd of December, 1786, the Roseway, of 250 tons, was launched at Shelburne, and in 1787 a brig was launched at Lunenburg. These seem to have been the first vessels of any considerable size built in that Province for commercial purposes, but there is evidence that in the earlier days of the French occupation one or more vessels were constructed for war purposes—very modest ships, we can well imagine. From the small beginning we have mentioned, commercial shipbuilding grew to large proportions, until it was the proud boast of the Nova Scotians that they owned per head more tonnage than any other people in the world. In New Brunswick there was similar growth; in Prince Edward Island the industry became one of considerable importance, and in Quebec and other places on the St. Lawrence River there was similar activity.

Then came the days when the wooden ship was no longer in demand. Vessels of iron, and, later, of steel, displaced the wooden walls. The Colonial shipyards fell into decay. The iron and steel sailing ships soon had to make way for the steamers. For some years now the wooden shipbuilding industry has produced only fishing vessels and a few other vessels of small tonnage suited for particular trades. Efforts to establish steel shipbuilding have been successful in only a small way. The desire for larger operations in this class of maritime enterprise has been very general, and frequent efforts have been made to devise schemes for the encouragement of the business. Hitherto, however, apparently insuperable obstacles have been encountered in the form of the greater skill and cheaper labor of Great Britain. In normal times these advantages were so distinct and so large that the prospects of successful Canadian competition with the British shipbuilder were small, and only in rare cases were steel vessels built in Canada.

The war has changed the situation for the time, and it is quite possible that the shipbuilding industry may now become so firmly established as to be able to stand on its feet even after the war has closed. There is such a demand for ships of all kinds, to make good the war losses and to carry the world's increasing traffic, that builders can command unprecedented prices. British shipping companies are giving large orders for the construction of steel vessels in the United States. In Canada there is a wide revival of activity in the shipyards available for the construction of wooden vessels. The construction of steel vessels is being undertaken with considerable energy. The British Government has authorized the Munition Board to enter into contracts for a number of steel vessels. Whatever may be the situation when there is a return to normal business conditions, it is believed that for a considerable period there will be a demand for vessels at prices which will justify extensive building operations, both in wood and steel. In the course of this movement very substantial shipbuilding concerns may be established in the Dominion, and being established, they may be able to continue operations even when war prices are no longer quoted.

As between Great Britain and Canada, the difference in the cost of skilled labor has hitherto been the chief ground of objection to shipbuilding proposals here. There are many

who believe that one effect of the war will be to bring the prices of such labor on the two sides of the ocean nearer to an equality, and that in this way the disadvantage of Canada as a field for steel shipbuilding will largely, if not wholly, disappear. Present conditions seem to give assurance that for a considerable period shipbuilding will be a profitable business here; and if the industry be firmly established in these times of high prices, there will be less difficulty than there has hitherto been in making it one of a permanent character.

Food Economy

RECENT discussions in the House of Commons suggest that it may be found necessary to take more drastic measures than have hitherto been used for the control of food prices and food consumption in Canada. Whether this be officially done or not, one thing is very clear, and that is that, since an early termination of the war, while hoped for, is not to be counted on, there is the gravest need for reasonable economy in the use of food. Vigorous appeals for greater production have been made, with considerable success. Many of the waste spaces of our land are being planted, and in this way there will be a large additional production of vegetables. But ordinary crops of foodstuffs the world over are likely to be short, because of the immense number of men withdrawn from the field of industry for service in the field of war. These conditions have been but little felt in Canada up to the present time. True, prices have advanced to alarming figures, but those who have had money to pay for it have been able to command whatever they required. There is every probability that if the war continues much longer, even in this food producing land of Canada we shall have to face a condition of scarcity that will not be merely a question of prices. The conservation of food, the abolition of the wastefulness that is too general, and a decrease in the consumption of food are things which should be impressed upon everybody. In England, the King has made a personal appeal to the people along these lines, and intimation is given that if the improved situation is not brought about by voluntary action, restrictions of a more severe character than yet known may have to be imposed by official action. Many Canadians who read of these proceedings in England may easily make the mistake of supposing that nothing of the kind can occur here. A mistake such a conclusion will certainly be. There is more than a possibility that at an early day similar restrictive measures may be adopted in this country. Irrespective of any action that may be taken by the authorities, every householder, every citizen, should take up for serious consideration the question of preventing waste and utilizing all foodstuffs to the best advantage, with a view of reducing consumption where this is possible without prejudice to health.

Military Honors

THE pride that is felt by those at home who read of the military decorations conferred on their friends at the front is likely to be considerably modified by the reading of a recent article in "Canada," an excellent journal published in London, particularly devoted to Canadian affairs. In the case of acts of outstanding gallantry which are rewarded by the Victoria Cross, and in field promotions in rank, our London contemporary has no complaint to make. But other distinctions, it holds,

are "distributed" on lines which, though they follow those of the British war office, are not regarded with admiration. How these honors are awarded is thus described by "Canada":

"The principle adopted is that a certain number of decorations, suitable for officers and men, is allotted to a corps or division. Each battalion commander is naturally anxious to get what he considers his share of these for his own particular command. The idiosyncrasy of a commanding officer has a not inconsiderable effect on the number of distinctions awarded to his battalion. One man would very warmly recommend for a piece of work carried through or a risk run, while another, considering it an ordinary matter of duty, might fail even to mention it in his report. These matters of difference in judgment and temperament make it inevitable that the merit of distinctions awarded must largely vary.

"There is, however, another factor which may impair the merit of rewards, which is that, under the present conditions of trench warfare, there is a tendency for 'periodic' distribution. After a certain length of time another batch of distinctions becomes due. This period, in the case of an army corps, or even of a division, may have covered weeks of intense and stubborn fighting—such, for instance, as the fights for the craters at St. Eloi—or a period of relative quietude. Great deeds of endurance, of sacrifice, and of gallantry took place in the shambles of the St. Eloi craters; many distinctions were deserved by officers and men. But, under the system of 'distribution' and of recommendation, it becomes almost impossible to make an at all adequate and satisfactory list of honors for the particular units engaged at such times of severe and desperate stress.

"Consider the feelings of a man who survived days of incessant struggle against icy mud, hunger, and a hopeless fight against superior odds, when he sees ribbons on the breasts of men who, he knows, have never been in an assault or repelled an attack, while he and his companions go ribbonless."

Most readers will be surprised to learn that the honors so often reported by the newspaper correspondents are awarded in this loose and indiscriminating way, and will desire to see some better method devised. "Canada's" suggestion for reform is contained in the following passage:

"Canada had a unique opportunity at the commencement of the war of adopting its own standard and its own methods for the conferring of decorations, and even now it is not too late to discard a system which is unsatisfactory and unsuitable for non-professional soldiers. The reform could be carried out by adopting a very rigid system of reports on personal services, which would be reviewed at the end of the war by a competent Board, who would have data in their hands on which to judge and compare the relative value to be attached to the opinions of the reporting officers. The final judgments of such a War Distinctions Board would avoid many of the anomalies and surprises which, under present conditions, give real cause for disgusted comment. In the old professional armies distinction came largely by seniority and often by favoritism. There is place for neither in our citizen armies, where merit, carefully and exactly judged, should alone count."