

We can hardly build to the capacity of the yards unless somebody is prepared to man the boats when built. The department does not just run wild on a particular type of boat. If, during the next eight months, the plan is to train men for, say, twenty boats, we build the twenty boats. Britain may ask us to build fifty for them; we do it.

I do not see why shipbuilding should be retarded because Canada is unable to man the boats. Every effort should be made by the Government to build cargo ships as speedily as possible, and if more ships are built than we can man, the surplus should be turned over to England, the United States, China or Russia.

I will refer to the contracts that have been awarded for the construction of steel cargo ships in Canada. I may say here that I should not have had this information if my honourable friend from Pictou (Hon. Mr. Tanner) had not placed a question on the Order Paper. In response to his question this information was obtained. In January and April, 1941, twenty-six ships were ordered on account of the United Kingdom, and from May to October of that year seventy-seven ships were ordered on account of Canada. Here is the break-down that was supposed to be so very secret:

Total number of ships now contracted for:

- (a) On United Kingdom orders and account—
26 ships, 10,000 tons, dead weight, each, approximately.
- (b) On Canada's orders and account—
124 ships, 10,000 tons, dead weight, each, approximately.
18 ships, 4,700 tons, dead weight, each, approximately.

But only two ships have been fully commissioned and sent to sea.

There may be reasons for the strikingly slow progress that has been made in the building of ships, and perhaps the honourable leader (Hon. Mr. King) will be able to enlighten the House when he replies. Possibly there has been a shortage of skilled and unskilled labour, or structural steel, or ship-plate. If any such shortage has been responsible for the delay, would it not have been the right thing for the Minister to say so in the other House?

While I am on this subject of plates, I may say I understand that a new plate mill has been built at Sydney. We have never been informed that that mill is in operation. Why should Parliament not have been informed about that? We have never been told whether or not sufficient plates are being turned out there to take care of the requirements of the shipbuilding programme. I have no desire to criticize unduly or to retard the Government's efforts, but I do strenu-

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE.

ously object to the long delay in this important matter of shipbuilding, especially when there is such a fearful shortage of ships. Happily, on the Atlantic ocean the loss has been only one per cent, but in the Caribbean and the South Seas the losses have been very serious. I hope my remarks will lead to a greater effort on the part of the Government, and particularly of those charged with the duty of seeing that ships are constructed. If there actually is a shortage of skilled and unskilled labour, why not have an announcement made over the radio, stating the need for men and the rates of wages? But to go along as we have been going and to receive a statement that after fourteen months only two ships have been put into commission—well, all I can say is, that information is very disappointing to Parliament and to the public.

I may be permitted to make a brief reference to the shipbuilding programme in the last war. We took over all the existing berths, in fourteen yards. We did not spend any money on the expansion of those yards, and we had our ships built at a fixed price. But, as I mentioned at the commencement of my remarks, I understand that this Government has spent vast sums of money on the expansion of shipyards, berths, and so on. I should very much like the honourable leader to tell us the amount that has been spent in this way, and also whether these yards are Government-owned. It would be very interesting to know that. I should also like the honourable leader to tell us, at his convenience, when it is expected the seventeen partially manned yards will be fully manned, and to give us some indication as to when shipbuilding is to be speeded up. Why build seventeen yards, at a cost of millions, and not be able to man them? Would it not have been the part of wisdom to sit down, in the first place, and study the available labour, skilled and unskilled, as well as the possibilities of getting structural steel and ship-plates, and then to expand your shipbuilding programme as you had the men and material to carry it along? I shall be very glad if the honourable leader can show that I am wrong, but it does look to me as if poor judgment was used in launching out quickly and constructing nineteen yards, with the result that I have mentioned.

There is only one more subject I want to touch on. The honourable leader referred to the expansion of the Canadian Navy. I say Amen to all his words in commendation of the Canadian Navy. A splendid effort has been made in connection with the Navy, and there has been a very fine development. But somewhat over a year ago, in this House, I differed with the Minister of National Defence