

OFFSETTING THE SUBMARINES

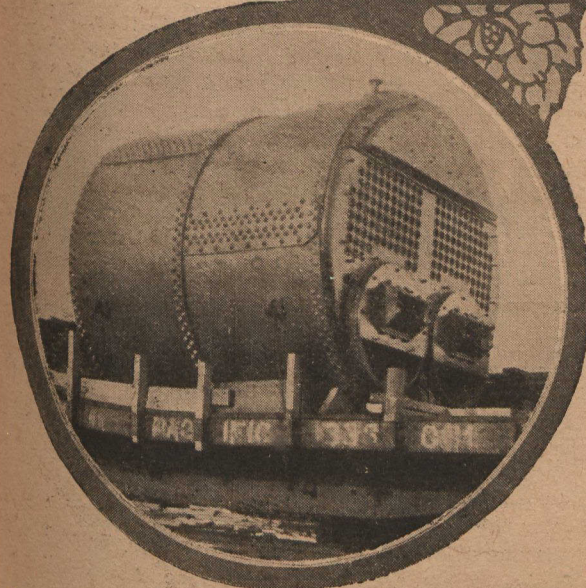
Canadian Shipbuilders are Helping to Mend up the Loss of 400,000 Tons Shipping in the Month of February

But Canadian Shipbuilders need and expect more assistance from the Government for the building of small-sized wooden vessels so Maritime opinion says

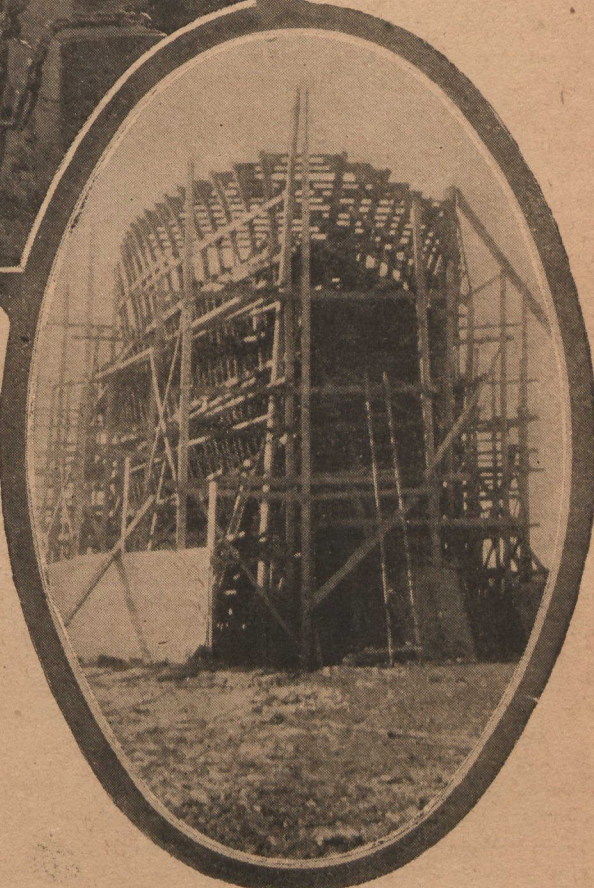


Ship Iron Workers in the Blacksmith Section of the Liverpool Coal and Supply Co., N.S.

Of 22 ships now being built in Canadian shipyards, 20 are said to be building for Norwegian crews to sail from Norwegian ports



A marine tube boiler en route from a Toronto firm to be installed in a steel steamer built by the Nova Scotia Steel Co., at New Glasgow, N.S.



Skeleton of a Hull built by the Nova Scotia Steel Co. at New Glasgow, N.S.

That was in the days of wood. Now in the age of iron and steel the shipbuilding industry has been largely transformed. But Canada is as well equipped in raw materials for modern shipbuilding as she was for the building of wooden hulls. And with unlimited iron and steel, with unsurpassed harbours, dockage and shipyard facilities, the building of wooden ships is as important to Canada to-day—or should be—as it was in the days of old.

How important it is considered by Maritimers to develop our shipbuilding industries in a time of world-destruction of ships by submarines is intimated by a speech delivered in the Canadian House of Commons on Jan. 19, 1917, by Sir Donald Nicholson, M.P. for Queen's, P.E.I. The member for Queen's said:

The merchant marine of Canada, from holding fourth place in the world—some contend third place—has greatly degenerated, and to-day I am well informed that the Scandinavian flag has supplanted the flag of the British in regard to the merchant marine on the seven seas.

In the Canadian Railway and Marine World for October, 1916, appears a long article entitled, "The Dominion Government Asked to Start Ocean Shipbuilding." The Quebec Board of Trade in their action affirmed that they thought it would be wise for the Government to take their initiative and build six or more commercial steamships of eight or ten thousand tonnage each, say two at Montreal, two at Quebec and two in the Maritime Provinces, on the basis of the cost of labour and material, plus a reasonable percentage for the builder. By doing this, they would introduce an element of competition and at the same time establish a basis of cost to guide them in the legislation necessary to establish this most important industry.

I could easily refer to statistics, which show that the United States shipyards had at that time on the stocks three hundred and sixty-eight steel steamships, aggregating more than one million tons, and that there are more than twice that number of ships carrying the Stars and Stripes than there were before the war. If they can do this, with wages for shipwrights as high as seventy-five cents an hour, surely we can do much better with the more moderate scale of wages prevailing in Canada.

Shipbuilding is bonused in Norway, Russia, British Columbia, England, Newfoundland, and the United States, and I suppose in all the great nations. So for the good of Canada, its future and its continued prosperity, I trust the matter will be seriously considered by the House.

The Prince Edward Island Patriot comes at the problem editorially—as it often does. In its issue

of Feb. 15 the Patriot says:

At present there are at least six Norwegian ships in course of construction at Montreal, and it is doubtful if there is one Canadian steamer of any size. There are now twenty-two ships being built in Canada, twenty for the Norwegians and two for the United States. A mercantile marine could be and should be built in Canadian yards, for if we can build them for other countries we can build them for ourselves.

Again, we note that during the past year two different groups of capitalists have been investigating conditions in Halifax for the purpose of building another drydock and shipbuilding plant there. "It is understood," says a Halifax despatch to the Star, "that these two groups expected to get the usual drydock subsidy from the Dominion Government, and to construct a shipbuilding plant in addition to the drydock."

Now, is it possible that, while other parts of Canada are becoming alive to the situation that now presents itself in favour of shipbuilding, no movement, either private or public, has yet been made in the Province of Prince Edward Island on this matter? Surely it is the duty of the local Government and the Federal representatives to interest themselves in this matter, and to bring before the Dominion Government the necessity of encouraging in a substantial manner the establishment of a shipbuilding plant and the building of ships in this province.

Again we note that at the annual meeting of the Alberton and West Prince Board of Trade on Jan. 17, 1917, a drastic unanimous resolution was passed in favor of bonusing Canadian-built wooden ships.

CANADIAN shipbuilding is always a bone of contention. Just at present it is an exceedingly live issue in various parts of Canada, on the Pacific, on the great lakes, at Montreal, in the Maritime Provinces. From letters, editorials, copies of resolutions, speeches by M.P.s and photographs recently sent to the Canadian Courier, the shipbuilding industries of Canada seem to be of particular interest in the east. This is natural. At present the shipping of several continents is diverted to Halifax as a port of call for neutral ships during the submarine war. German subs have sunk more shipping in the month of February than could ordinarily be built in Canadian shipyards in several years. None of this happens to have been Canadian shipping. But Canadian vessels have been sunk by submarines. More of them may be sunk. Canada, according to her population, has as vital an interest in the shipping crisis of the world as any other nation. We are naturally a shipbuilding country. We built ships long before ever we got prairie farms or had a National Policy to protect Canadian industries. We built ships long before we had a Canadian Parliament. There was a time when the ships of this country were relatively more important than any other enterprise.