

the two Empresses for the Canadian Pacific railway. But the Minister of Marine and Fisheries was afraid to give it to a firm that built the 'Empress of Britain,' and the 'Empress of Ireland,' and I do not hesitate to say that in my opinion it was not done for that purpose at all. Lewis, of Montreal, is the man who knows what it was done for, and if the minister does not know why it was done, it is about time he did.

Mr. WARBURTON. I happen to know something about this ship, which I do not think the hon. member for Grenville (Mr. Reid) does. He speaks about the Canadian Pacific railway building the empresses. That is true, but the empresses are an entirely different class of ship from the 'Earl Grey,' and a shipbuilding firm that would build an empress might not be able to build an ice-breaker like the 'Earl Grey.' If my memory serves me right, Vickers, Sons & Maxim were the people whom the Russian government employed to build their ice-breakers. The ice-breakers of the Russian government have very heavy work to do, and this firm was selected in preference to all other firms because of their capability for doing that kind of work. I do not think the Minister of Marine and Fisheries would have been justified in going up the Great Lakes and trying experiments there which might result to our disadvantage. He would not have been justified in giving the people there a contract to build a boat which is required for the most arduous work perhaps in the service. The 'Earl Grey' is no doubt a remarkably fine boat, and she has stood a very severe test this winter. This has been one of the most severe winters we have had for many years, and she has proved a great success. It is questionable whether she would have proved so great a success had she been built by men who did not understand that sort of work. A vessel engaged in that work has to be of great weight, she has to have good speed, to have plenty of beam in order to afford accommodation. True, she is not always loaded with passengers and freight, but at other times she is. But the point I wish to make is that the men who built this ship were not the men who build ocean greyhounds. They build men of war, and have built ice-breakers for the Baltic and for the northern seas. You will find in the reports that many of the English firms who are good shipbuilders would not undertake to build vessels of this class because it is out of their line, they have not the necessary experience and skill. I suppose there are no better shipbuilders in the world than Harland & Wolff, of Belfast, but I doubt if they would undertake to build a vessel of this kind, because it is out of their line. To build a vessel of this kind requires peculiar facili-

ties and peculiar skill. If the minister sees his way shortly to build another vessel, I hope he will follow the course he has adopted with regard to the 'Earl Grey,' and not trust the building of the new vessel to inexperienced firms. It is too important a matter. If you make a mistake in the building of a vessel of that kind you cannot repair it. It will take a couple of years to get such a vessel built.

Now, I would like to say a word or two about Captain Brown, whose name has been mentioned. I know Captain Brown very well. He is an old, experienced mariner, and I am quite sure that he could have built a ship if he was put to it. I have no doubt that if you put him down in a shipyard, provided with plans, and with the necessary facilities, he could oversee the construction of a ship of this class. But a man like Captain Brown, a first-class seaman of great experience, a man who has had many years experience in ice navigation, would be just the man to consult with a naval expert, or naval architect, in regard to improvements in a vessel you were building for that sort of work.

Any intelligent sea captain—and Captain Brown is a particularly intelligent man—knowing ships as well as Captain Brown knows them, in the course of a very short experience, would be able to point out the important features in building of a vessel of that kind, and in view of the fact that Captain Brown has had an experience of these straits for the last twelve or fourteen years it is beyond question that he would probably know more than any other man, except his brother captain who is engaged in the same occupation, what sort of a vessel is best adapted for that route. Mr. Duguid went down there and crossed week after week in these vessels to see what kind of work they did and to see what improvements he could make upon the plans that had been adopted, and he was largely indebted to the captain of these vessels for the knowledge that he acquired.

There is a great difference in builders. The 'Stanley' was built by the late government about twenty years ago, and the 'Minto' some twelve or fourteen years ago. The 'Stanley' is generally believed to have been a better vessel than the 'Minto.' She was built by the Fairchilds, a firm of large experience in that style of building, and she was built to some extent under the direction of a well known old sea captain who at one time was a member of this House, and who was able to give information with reference to the ice conditions to be met with in the straits. They turned out a remarkably good vessel; she was not as strong as the later ones, but she was a good vessel and she was probably built by a better builder of that class of ships than the firm that the 'Minto' was built by.