

The Address—Mr. Green

a further 80 ships totalling about 560,000 gross tons were on charter to the United Kingdom. It also shows that we had 17 large shipyards and 16,000 men working in those yards.

This commission was set up in 1947 to advise the government on shipping and shipbuilding. Some of us pointed out at that time that the act should have included a statement of policy by the government on those two questions, just as the legislation in the United States does. There we find, right in the act setting up the commission, the policy of the government with respect to shipbuilding and shipping. But Canada did not do that. The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) brought in one of his usual frame-work bills, with just enough to hold it together, and no details. I think he was quite wrong in not announcing a policy.

Mr. Howe: The Minister of Trade and Commerce did not bring in a bill at all; the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) brought it in.

Mr. Green: The Minister of Transport may have brought it in; but the Minister of Trade and Commerce was the father of the bill, and he put it through—just as he has fathered in this house so many other things from many departments.

In 1949 we find ourselves in a position where many of the ships are being sold. As recently as the month of January of this year a dispatch in a west coast paper stated, "B.C. ships sold for \$3 million."

Mr. Howe: Who sold the ships?

Mr. Green: It reports that five of the lake ships have been sold to foreign flags.

Mr. Howe: Who sold them?

Mr. Green: The reason given for the sale of these ships is that they are not able to compete with ships of faster speeds. That is the picture of what is going on. We pointed out many years ago that Canada should be building some of these faster cargo freighters, but at that time he laughed and scoffed at the idea. He said that these slow boats were good enough, that we shipped principally grain, lumber and bulk products, and that we did not need faster ships.

Now the shipping companies who got the Canadian merchant marine after the war are selling their ships because they are too slow, and because we need modern cargo vessels.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I would inform the hon. member that his time has expired.

Mr. Green: I allowed the Minister of Trade and Commerce to make a statement in the middle of my speech.

Some hon. Members: Go on.

Mr. Green: I shall be only about five minutes more, if I might be permitted to conclude what I have to say on this subject. Shipyards are becoming idle. In Vancouver, I believe, the numbers employed in shipyards have fallen from a total of something more than 25,000 during the war, to only 750. Seamen are losing their jobs.

After the few remarks I made in the house on Friday about merchant shipping, I received an air mail letter from a father in Vancouver whose boy has served five years in the Canadian merchant marine. That boy has a splendid record of service, and is taking a course in navigation at the present time. A letter from him to his father, dated at Baltimore, January 20, contains this paragraph:

We sure got a lot of depressing news here. The Canadian companies are selling their ships, and no more jobs. There is a ship with the Canadian flag at the next dock, she has English officers and an Indian crew, the pay and conditions are deplorable. I think myself there will not be one Canadian crew in one year; so I am getting out, and going to New Zealand.

Time is precious in this matter; yet the government has no policy. I suggest that without further delay a construction program is needed. Modern dry vessels and modern tankers should be built. Canada has built them for other governments in the last year or two, but not one has been built by Canada for use in the Canadian merchant marine.

I suggest that 50 per cent or more of our exports should be carried in Canadian bottoms; that there should be a stipulation that annual overhaul of Canadian ships must be done in Canadian yards. We were told on the coast about Canadian ships having their annual overhaul in Japanese yards. With that sort of thing going on we can never build a Canadian merchant marine. There should be restrictions in connection with our coastal trade, and it may be necessary to have some provision for government subsidies.

Furthermore fair treatment must be given to Canadian merchant seamen. I said earlier in my remarks what I thought about the treatment meted out to Canadian merchant seamen who served during the war. We will never build up a merchant marine until we treat the merchant seamen right. For example, at this moment there is no labour representative on the Canadian maritime commission, although we were told there would be one.

Suppose we should have this war about which the government seems to be worrying so much. Then the merchant marine will once more be of the utmost importance.

Just to sum up on this question I say that a definite policy is needed, and needed quickly.

Those are the five subjects which I place before the government for consideration. I