

CANADA'S SHIPBUILDING ACTIVITIES

Shipbuilding contracts placed in Canada by the Imperial Munitions Board since March 1st, 1917, constitute the biggest year in shipbuilding this country has ever seen. Contracts have been let in the last twelve months for 46 wooden ships with a total tonnage of 128,000, representing \$24,500,000, and for 43 steel ships, totalling 211,300 tons, worth \$40,000,000, or a total value of \$64,500,000. Four steel ships aggregating 13,900 tons, the individual boats having a tonnage of 4,200, 3,400, 4,500 and 1,800, have been completed. Four wooden ships have already been launched and several others are ready to take the water. New yards were opened during the year at Welland, Vancouver, and Toronto. All yards for the construction of wooden ships are new or have been added to.

The value of the contracts let in the different provinces is as follows:—Nova Scotia, \$1,340,000; New Brunswick, \$1,000,000; Quebec, \$11,600,000; Ontario, \$19,240,000; British Columbia, \$31,434,000.

Contracts in Provinces

In British Columbia nine steel ships, each of 8,800 tons, worth \$14,750,000; two of 4,600 tons, worth \$1,679,000, and one of 4,500 tons, worth \$905,651, or a total of \$17,334,651, have been contracted for, along with 27 wooden ships, worth \$14,100,000.

In Ontario 25 steel ships were contracted for. These comprise 13 of 3,500 tons, nine of 3,400 tons, one of 4,300 tons, and two of 2,900 tons, a total tonnage of 86,200 tons, representing \$17,240,000. In addition to this four wooden ships, totalling 11,200 tons, worth \$2,000,000, have been contracted for.

In Quebec four steel ships of 7,000 tons each, valued at \$5,600,000, and twelve wooden ships of 2,800 tons worth \$6,000,000, representing a total value of \$11,600,000, have been contracted for.

In New Brunswick two wooden ships, each of 2,800 tons, worth \$1,000,000, are contracted for.

In Nova Scotia two steel ships of 1,800 and 2,400 tons, worth \$840,000, and one wooden ship at \$500,000, are contracted for.

In 1918 Tonnage Will Be 400,000

According to a report of the Imperial Munitions Board it is reasonable to suppose that the approximate total tonnage for 1918 will be about 400,000. The approximate tonnage of wooden vessels being built by the Imperial Board on the two coasts, the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River is about 146,000. Figures as to the exact number of men employed in this programme are not available, but assuming an average labor cost per ton it is stated it will not be far from the equivalent of 25,000 men continuously employed.

In view of the foregoing, the figures with respect to the tonnage constructed in Canada in past years is of interest. For instance, 190,756 tons were constructed in 1874 when wooden ship construction was at its height, and each year since then has shown less activity until the war years. In 1880 the tonnage constructed was 65,441; in 1885, 41,179; in 1890, 52,378; in 1895, 16,270; in 1900, 22,326; in 1905, 19,781; in 1910, 22,283, and in 1914, 43,346.

For Imperial Munitions Board

At present practically every shipbuilding plant in Canada that is equipped for building steel ships is making ships for the Imperial Munitions Board. Just as soon as each berth becomes vacant it is being taken up by the Dominion government in connection with the large shipbuilding programme announced by Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, minister of marine and fisheries, early in the year. Following are the details of conditions in the different shipbuilding plants of Canada:—

Two berths are vacant at Canadian Vickers, Limited, Montreal, with whom the government has entered into contract to fill the berths at once. Arrangements have also been made to fill berths becoming vacant in May, August and September with 8,200-ton ships.

Arrangements have been made with the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company to fill one berth now vacant with a 3,800-ton ship as rapidly as men can be found. It is also expected two 3,000-ton ships will be started, one in April and one in May.

The Wallace Ship Yard, Vancouver, will commence building a 4,350-ton ship early in May. They also propose building a 5,000-ton standard ship at an early date.

The government has made arrangements with the Port Arthur Shipbuilding Company to fill two berths vacant before July with two 3,000-ton ships, canal size boats.

The Polson Iron Works, Toronto, will fill four berths vacant in October with four 3,000-ton ships.

Get Steel from United States

The Canadian Allis-Chalmers, Toronto, say they can build six ships before June, 1919, and will start as soon as berths become vacant.

Messrs. Coughlan & Sons, Vancouver, find it impossible to commence further work this year. They are building ships for the Imperial Munitions Board.

The Davie Shipbuilding Company, Quebec, will fill a berth as soon as vacant with a 5,000-ton ship.

In the meantime the department of marine and fisheries has made arrangements with the United States to secure the necessary steel to take care of shipbuilding, and at the same price as the plants across the border are paying. This steel is to be delivered to the various factories as required up to June, 1919.

It is pointed out that the establishment of new yards would only draw off men from the other yards because there are only a certain number of men available for this work. Therefore, the more the men were spread the fewer ships would be got into the water. Under existing conditions it is more important to get a few ships into service than have a large number under construction and none available.

CANADIAN NORTHERN ARBITRATION

Testifying before the Canadian Northern Railway board of arbitrators recently at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, Mr. Samuel Bertron, of the banking firm of Bertron and Briscoe, New York, declared that the stock of the Canadian Northern Railway at present was worth from 50 to 60 cents on the dollar. His estimate was based on the future prospects of the railway, the growing territory through which it operated, its small grades, economical operation, and its small bonded indebtedness, which had been placed on a very low interest return. These features of the Canadian Northern Railway had attracted a group of New York financiers, who, up to the entrance of the United States into the war, had virtually consummated a proposition to finance the railway on the representations of Sir William Mackenzie. It was at the instigation of these financiers that the Loomis-Platten report on the Canadian Northern Railway was prepared.

CANADA'S TRADE HAS INCREASED

Canada's trade for the ten months of the fiscal year ending on January 31st reached a total of \$2,229,493,276, according to the monthly statement issued from the customs department. This constitutes an increase of \$351,208,579 over the same period last year, when the total trade amounted to \$1,878,284,697. Domestic merchandise exported reached a total of \$1,353,811,184 during the ten months of this year as against \$960,736,072 during 1916. The exports of domestic merchandise during the month of January, this year, however, were lower than a year ago. They totalled \$96,216,284 as against \$99,106,259 a year ago.

Merchandise entered for consumption during the ten months this year reached a total of \$823,059,701 as compared with \$674,964,548 a year ago. During the month of January the total of this class was \$60,677,414, which was lower than in January, 1917, when it reached \$72,323,074. Foreign merchandise exported during the ten months of the fiscal year totalled \$38,874,724 as against \$20,470,769 for a similar period in 1917, and coin and bullion exported was \$2,972,822 as compared with \$196,190,607 a year ago.

The total of dutiable goods entered for consumption during the ten months ending January 31st was \$460,976,255. Last year this class of goods totalled \$370,646,468. Free goods during the ten months amounted to \$362,082,846 as against \$304,318,080 in 1917. Duty collected during the ten months of 1917 totalled \$136,339,474, which was a substantial increase over the same period a year ago, when it reached \$119,141,351.