

Mr. COCHRANE: You call it a policy, nobody else did.

Mr. SINCLAIR: What is it?

Mr. COCHRANE: Two ships.

Mr. SINCLAIR: That is some explanation.

Mr. COCHRANE: And no one will benefit more by them than will Nova Scotia.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I doubt it. We require ships in Nova Scotia, but we do not expect the Government to build them for us. If we did, we would be disappointed. Two wooden ships cannot be of very much use in the carrying on of the business of Nova Scotia. If that is all the minister is able to do in the way of assisting the shipbuilding industry, it is a very trifling way of dealing with a big question. The minister, of course, knows that it is possible for the Government to do something in the way of helping the shipbuilding industry. Two proposals have been mentioned in this House. One is that a bounty of so much per ton should be paid by the Government to overcome the excess cost resulting from the high tariff. No country with a high tariff has been successful in establishing a shipbuilding industry. You cannot become a great ship-owning country if you have a high protective tariff. Great Britain is the only country in the world which has made a complete success in shipbuilding. Nearly all the countries in Europe which have protective tariffs have failed to develop this industry. They have assisted shipbuilding, some of them to a very great extent. The United States also offered great help to the industry. They built a protective wall around the country and would not allow one of their citizens to buy a ship outside; every ship sailing under the American flag had to be built in the United States. That was the law up to three years ago. They now have a more intelligent system, and they permit the buying of ships abroad and the registration of those ships under the American flag, without the payment of duty. The second proposal is to reduce the tariff. That is the real cure, and the only way we can ever become a great shipbuilding country. Introduce free trade, and our maritime industry will do the rest. That has been the experience in Great Britain, and for thirty-five years Great Britain has outstripped the world in shipbuilding. Just before the

[Mr. Sinclair.]

war they had registered tonnage of about 20,000,000 tons, both sail and steam—more than one-half of the total tonnage of the world. It was only possible for England to achieve this result under a free trade policy. Not only was she able to build all the ships required for her own trade, but she built ships for the rest of the world as well. Nearly every foreign nation had its ships built in British yards, because it could be done there cheaper than anywhere else, for the reason that she had free raw material and freedom in every way. The Canadian people should follow the example of the Mother Country. I submit that the people of Canada will not approve of the venture the minister is now making. I see no purpose in going into the building of two wooden ships to be used for the carrying of freight from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic coast via the Panama canal.

Mr. REID: I hardly think it fair that the consideration of an item of this kind should develop into a discussion as to the policy of the Government in regard to building ships. I think that question is large enough to be discussed by itself. To say that the purchase of those two vessels is in any way connected with that policy is, of course, unfair. As I understand the situation it is that the people of British Columbia had been urging for some years that they should have water transportation between eastern Canada and western Canada. They claimed that eastern Canada had the advantage of water transportation. If the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were depending solely upon the railways, they would very soon make strong demands for water transportation, because there are many products that will not stand a high freight rate. Those three provinces have water transportation, and they have it at the expense of the Dominion, and British Columbia is paying a part of it. The very constituency my hon. friend (Mr. Sinclair) represents has water transportation at the expense of British Columbia.

Mr. CARROLL: Will the minister kindly point out how the province of Nova Scotia has more water communication than has British Columbia, through the intervention of this Government?

Mr. REID: Does my hon. friend say that the province of Nova Scotia, or any of the lower provinces, have no water communication at the expense of this Government?