

if this afternoon there is a more general debate than usual, I for one shall be much pleased.

I rise, however, this afternoon for one particular purpose. The greatest problem that confronts Great Britain and her gallant Allies at the present time is the shortage of shipping. All the American ocean ports, including those of Canada, are chock-a-block with war equipment and supplies, as are also the railways in both countries, as the result of a great bottleneck caused by a shortage of shipping space. I regret that the Minister of Munitions and Supply has been so reticent in giving information with regard to our shipbuilding programme. In fact, he has, so to speak, drawn a veil of secrecy over it. I cannot understand why he should do so, in view of the fact that his colleagues in the Government, such as the Minister of Defence, the Naval Minister, and the Minister of Defence for Air, give out full information about the men in the three combined forces, both here and overseas. As a matter of fact, only a few weeks ago the Minister in charge of Naval Services visited Halifax to drive rivets in the keels of two destroyers on which construction had just been commenced, and he was not as modest as my friend the Minister of Munitions and Supply: he had movie-camera men there, and reporters, and the widest publicity was given to the laying of the keels for these destroyers. I am not sure, myself, that that was the wise thing to do. While it may be all right to give out information about cargo ships, I doubt if it is wise to do so about naval construction, especially when the ships are being built in the most vulnerable port of Canada.

I desire to read a very brief article to show what wide publicity the American Press gives to the shipbuilding programme in the United States. The heading of this article is: "With the Victory Fleet. Let's go." Then there is a song which I will not read. The article says:

Morale building is the big idea behind observance of Maritime Day this year, and this whole shipbuilding programme is something to give your spine a tingle. It is not just something to celebrate on salt water, either. . . . Not completed ships, of course, but completed sub-assemblies. For, thanks to American assembly line production genius, the building of ocean vessels now begins with the making of lifeboats, complete with oars and ready to swing from the davits, at Kokomo, Indiana; the making of steel plate assemblies at Denver, the making of switchboard installations at Plainfield, Connecticut, the making of turbines at Schenectady, N.Y., and so on.

A full million men are building parts of ships at these inland plants—parts so complete they can be timed to arrive just when they are needed, hoisted into the hulls of the shipyard ways, riveted or welded into place and be ready to function.

These million workers are just as much entitled to break a bottle of champagne over a

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boiler or a reciprocating engine, give a cheer and sing the song of the Victory Fleet, as their fellow workmen at tidewater.

Perfection of this technique for shipbuilding has done wonders. Originally it was figured that six months—one hundred and eighty days—would be required to build a Liberty ship from keel-laying to commissioning.

But the time was soon cut to one hundred and five days, and as a record of eighty-three days has been set, marine engineers now figure that the average time will soon be ninety days. That's building ships, Mister, in any language.

Let me discontinue for a moment to say that out in one of the California yards, not long ago, the building of a 10,000-ton Liberty ship took only forty-five days from the time of the laying of the keel until she was fully commissioned and ready to go to sea.

By the end of 1943 it will be three thousand new ships completed. Half of them, one thousand and five hundred, will be the 10,000-ton Liberty ships that started out to be called ugly ducklings. Five hundred will be the modern C-type vessel that will form the nucleus of America's post-war merchant marine. Three hundred will be tankers. Seven hundred will be smaller ocean tugs and barges.

Small wonder, then, they sing the interlude to this new song of the Victory Fleet.

I quote that merely to show that the United States authorities do not hold the same view that my honourable friend the Minister of Munitions and Supply does. They give the fullest information of what they are doing in regard to the construction of ships.

Hon. Mr. KING: I do not wish to interrupt the honourable gentleman, but I think I should interject here that Mr. Howe informed me just recently that he is under obligation to the British and American Governments, for whom the majority of these ships are being built, not to disclose the number.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: I am coming to that. If Mr. Howe does not disclose it, perhaps I may state that the Chairman of the Shipbuilding Committee does.

Hon. Mr. KING: He may have erred.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: Oh, no. Here is what the Chairman said in making a speech before the Canadian Club in Montreal. He said the Canadian Government had contracted for one hundred and seventy-two ships, eighteen being of 4,600 tons, and the rest of 10,000 tons. That is the Chairman's statement.

Hon. Mr. SINCLAIR: What is the date of that?

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: A few weeks ago.

In addition to that, the Chairman of the Shipping Board came back from Washington and announced that he had an order from the