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CANADIAN SHIPBUILDING.

THE fact that the United States is about to undertake the construction of some 3,000 sizeable wooden ships as a war measure, while in this country at the present time there is much activity in shipbuilding thanks to the Imperial Government, inspires our conservative friends to indulge in a dream of future prosperity for the two great nations of North America. But what part can Canada expect to take in the predicted building up of future trade if she has no shipping of her own? The placing of British orders here because of the war is not a permanent industry for Canada, nor do we get the benefit of the output. And if the United States is to turn out thousands of new vessels which can be employed in post bellum trade, will that fact help us or take from us?

The opposition of the Rogers-Borden government to Canadian shipping is not a matter of political argument. The debates in the commons in the early part of 1916 showed clearly the attitude of the administration in regard to shipping. The government refused to take the duty off Diesel oil engines, the most economical and reliable form of marine engine invented and which are now being placed in nearly all modern vessels, including even battleships; refused to purchase a single ship, and declined to establish a single shipyard to build merchant vessels in this country. It is amusing now to read of a future having to do with the building of a merchant marine. The Dominion cannot have a merchant marine until the government places all materials which enter into the construction of such vessels on the free list. Machinery, engines and boilers must be untaxed if we are to have a fleet.

Speaking in the Commons over fifteen months ago on this matter Hon. Mr. Pugsley said:

This session we are granting the government the enormous sum of 250 million dollars, not entirely for war purposes, because they have asked us to give them authority to utilize a part of that amount for purposes which are not immediately concerned with the war. One of the objects for which this money is to be used is to promote the continuance of trade, industry and business connections, whether by means of insurance or indemnity against war risks. It will be interesting to the house to be informed whether or not it is intended to apply any part of that amount either directly to the building of ships or the encouragement of shipping. Certainly it would be quite possible for the government in the interest of Canada and for the purpose of encouraging the transportation of the food products of Canada to the mother country to use a portion of that very large appropriation for that purpose. Canada is vitally interested, not only from the standpoint of the empire, but from the standpoint of the producers of our own country, in having all reasonable facilities for the transportation of our products to the mother country and the allies. This matter, therefore, presents itself not only from the standpoint of encouraging Canadian shipbuilding, thus giving employment to Canadian shipwrights, not only from the standpoint of the Canadian producer, but also from the standpoint of the empire, because an adequate food supply for the mother

country and our allies is of vital importance with the conduct of the war.

But none of the large appropriation referred to by Hon. Mr. Pugsley was devoted to the objects he so clearly pointed out as deserving of special consideration in this way. But the money was spent. Mr. W. F. Maclean followed in April, a year ago, in urging the government to do something in the matter of aiding or encouraging Canadian shipping. The York member thought that **"every shipyard in Canada ought to be engaged in building ships that would help relieve the pressure in regard to ocean tonnage and freight."** At the same time Mr. Pugsley complained of the reluctance of the government to do anything in the matter. The administration acted, said the member for St. John, as if it were under the impression that no man in Canada thought that shipbuilding should be encouraged or undertaken in the Dominion except himself. Finally, in the same debate, Mr. J. G. Turriff remarked; **"We in Canada ought to be able to build ships as well as they can in the United States and it would appear to me to be good policy to take this matter up in earnest. My own feeling is that we should take off every vestige of duty on everything that goes into the construction of a ship."**

But still nothing was done and nothing has been done. Instead, the government still persists in its protectionist or high tariff stand, even in the matter of tractors, which the finance minister is reluctant to admit free of duty except on conditions which will restrict Canadian enterprise. There is no reason why tractors cannot be built in Canada as well as ships. In no way is the baneful influence of a high tariff being more clearly revealed than in such instances at a time like this, when artificial restrictions are hampering every attempt of the nation to play its part in the great industrial rally upon the success of which the war depends. And yet, the Borden Government are doing nothing except to stand by and see the Imperial Government do what our Canadian Government should have undertaken two years ago. As late as April 26th 1917 the only answer the Government could make regarding shipbuilding in Canada was as follows in reply to a question asked in the House of Commons by E. M. Macdonald, M.P. **The Government has under consideration the question of the best mode of aiding the extension of shipbuilding in Canada.**

WHAT IS AN "IMPROPER ACT."

As Lindsay on Saturday April 28th, Sir Sam Hughes stated:

"Although the (Meredith Duff) Commission sat for many weeks, costing a tremendous sum of money, not one solitary improper act on the part of any one concerned was found."

We would draw Sir Sam's attention to Allison's million dollar rake off, and the one hundred and five thousand dollars gift to the lady stenographer. If that does not constitute an improper act we would ask Sir Sam to state what in his opinion is an "improper act."