

building industry in eastern Canada involved the introduction into the ships of certain non-essential things which were purely British in their character. These things are very difficult for our shipbuilders to obtain; consequently it is most difficult to live up to the specifications. In the old days more wooden ships were constructed in this country than were constructed in Great Britain, and I do not see why there should not be a reasonable departure from these specifications, which are peculiar in their character. Again, people engaged in the construction of mercantile ships in Canada get contracts from the Imperial Munitions Board for the construction of ships, according to their specifications, upon force account. In the county of Lunenburg wooden ships have been constructed for a great many years. Not long ago a complaint came from that district to the effect that under the Imperial Munitions Board contract for the construction of a ship in the town of Liverpool, all kinds of inducements were being offered in the way of wages and otherwise to attract men from the other shipbuilding industry into the works which were being carried on for the Imperial Munitions Board under force account. That ought not to be. There should be some organization on the part of this Government with a view to improving and extending the shipbuilding industry. When hon. gentlemen on this side suggest that the Government take some action in the matter, we are told that the Imperial Munitions Board are the people that we have to deal with. That may be technically correct, but why should the whole question of the construction of ships in Canada be committed into the hands of a body responsible entirely to the Imperial authorities? My hon. friend now proposes to build two ships. Why should not the Government devise some general policy of aid to the construction of ships at this time? When Mr. Balfour went to the United States, he was accompanied by a group of experts who held consultation with the proper official in the United States. These experts did not come to Canada. They had conferences with the United States Government; they laid down the lines upon which the United States could assist the Allies. They settled upon the number of men to be sent by the United States, the number of shells to be provided, the quantity of food to be sent forward, the number of ships to be constructed by the United States in order to make up in some degree the wastage on the sea. The same thing may be said about the delegations

from France and Italy to the United States. But none of these gentlemen came to Canada, except Mr. Balfour and Mr. Viviani, who spent a pleasant hour or so with us before their return to their respective countries. Time after time the member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley) and I have, in this House, urged upon the Government the necessity for action in this matter. We were told that some very mysterious arrangements had been made by which the Imperial Government was to act through the Munitions Board. All that has been done, however, has been the advance by the Minister of Finance of \$10,000,000 in part payment of the debt that Canada owes Great Britain. Nothing has been done to assist the construction of ships in this country, with the exception of this small item in the estimates. There should be development of private enterprise under Government supervision; Government aid should be given along proper lines. The shell industry of Canada has been cut off; thousands of men are being dismissed from their employment. The men who invested their money in the making of shells are losing their investments; the men who have been employed in that work are being deprived of any means of earning their living.

There comes from every part of this country a demand that assistance should be given in the matter of shipbuilding. The transportation of food supplies to the other side is a matter of very serious importance. Then there is the problem of transporting across the ocean the unlimited quantities of fish that are to be found on the maritime coasts, and around Newfoundland. The apple crop of the Maritime Provinces, which is one of the best in years, cannot be sent across because of the lack of ships. The lumber trade of Canada is paralyzed because nothing has been done in the way of providing the necessary transportation. If you leave out of consideration the ships engaged in the transportation of men and of a small quantity of shells, you realize that there is an entire disappearance from the seas of Canadian merchant shipping. Is the Government going to do nothing to remedy this condition? Is the building of ships to be left entirely to Great Britain? Are the ships to be built by the Munitions Board in Canada to be the property of Great Britain? Are we to own no merchant marine in Canada? Why have we not done as the United States has done? Why has there not been an organization for the pur-