

Canada Shipping Act

explaining that it would not solve the problem.

He finally advised the delegation to communicate with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin).

In the same release, we find the following:

Since October last, 1,100 employees, almost all of them skilled workers, have been laid off. There remain only 400 workmen now assigned mostly to finishing two ships. That job will be completed by the end of June and no other start is foreseen at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, the shipyards of the Canadian Vickers rank second as to size in Canada and are among the best for the quality and the variety of the works they have achieved. They are the oldest modern Canadian shipyards, since they have built the first metal ships in 1910 and have managed to specialize in quite complex structures.

It is also important to point out that the Canadian Vickers shipyards are the only ones in Canada with building sheds where the work can go on in practically the same conditions as in the European shipyards which do not have to cope with a climate as harsh as ours.

In all technical publications on shipbuilding, it is often said that construction in building sheds is extremely advantageous. Highly complicated warships were built by Canadian Vickers, such as corvettes including the St. Lawrence corvette—great cargo ships for Colombia and Venezuela, lakers, the most modern ice-breakers, like the one built last year, and dredgers.

This diversification of labour enables the Canadian Vickers to undertake almost any kind of modern construction in conditions similar to those of any shipyard in the world, including those of Scandinavian countries.

Mr. Speaker, we remember that in a move beneficial to ships carrying the British ensign some Canadian boats were sold for peanuts to some individuals like Mr. Onassis who very quickly became millionaires and this while the Canadian government was applying a hand-out policy for shipyards, in order to let them make both ends meet and to ensure the construction of small warships or a few ice-breakers. Unfortunately, the decisions are always taken by a mere handful of politicians, while the directors and workers of those shipyards are left completely in the dark.

Mr. Speaker, I gave figures at the beginning of my remarks concerning the international position of Canada in the shipbuilding

industry. Let me quote a few other figures regarding our rank as owners of ships. The data come from a brief submitted by the C.N.T.U.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. I am sorry I have to interrupt the hon. member, and although in view of the present situation at the Canadian Vickers, hon. members can be easily tempted to talk about the shipping policy. I believe the bill we are considering right now does not concern any shipping company of Canada, nor the closing or opening of shipyards. I therefore ask the hon. member to confine himself to the bill before us.

• (8:20 p.m.)

Mr. Godin: Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks by quoting a very relevant summary, because I wonder, if we fail to take the opportunity provided by this bill, when shall we be able to discuss Canada's merchant marine? It is a distasteful subject, but at any rate, I shall take the liberty of quoting very briefly:

What the federal government must do.

It is a suggestion of the C.N.T.U.

Build a Canadian ocean-going merchant fleet capable of moving a minimum of 40 to 50 per cent of exports and imports.

Increase the subsidies for the construction of ships built in Canada in order to prompt Canadian shippers to order new ships at prices comparable to those which they could obtain in the United Kingdom.

Pass a legislation favourable in a practical way to shippers, seamen, workers in Canadian shipyards, as well as to all industries supplying materials and equipment. Encourage the replacement of obsolete ships with fast cargo ships capable of meeting foreign competition.

Revise the Merchant Marine Act of 1934 in order to take into account present day conditions of water transport.

Denounce the Merchant Marine Commonwealth Convention of 1931 and abolish the extraordinary privileges granted to those countries in order to protect our shipowners against the competition of ships registered in Commonwealth countries.

Levy a 50 per cent tax on repairs to or purchases of ocean-going vessels or equipment in foreign countries, except in cases of emergency.

Close our coastal and inland waters to all but those vessels that are registered and have been built in Canada and to all but those firms that are truly Canadian.

We ask for the immediate construction of a powerful ocean-going merchant fleet, built by and for Canadians, to transport at least part of Canada's export trade.