

*Vessel Construction Act*

**Mr. Chevrier:** I do not want to labour the point, but if my hon. friend can point to any harm that has been done to the shipbuilders, because of the late filing of this report, I would appreciate his telling me.

**Mr. Drew:** The report makes it quite clear that this industry is in a precarious position. Every day's delay in introducing whatever measures of assistance might have helped the industry has been injuring the industry, whether it be shipbuilding or the shipping that is the result of shipbuilding. The fact is that if this report had been tabled, there might have been practical suggestions. Since we hope that the discussions which are introduced in the various debates which take place during the sittings of this house are helpful, it might have been possible to have practical suggestions made at an earlier date.

I am not going to labour the point at all. I do say that the delay in tabling this report has denied to the members of the house an opportunity they would have otherwise had, of considering an extremely valuable report during this session. It is true there will be an opportunity of discussing the details of the report during the next session, but the procedure that has been followed has successfully prevented any adequate discussion of it during this session. It is obvious from the differentiation that is drawn between shipbuilding and shipping, that it is not now possible to discuss, in the detail which this report deserves, the plight of an industry which is of immense concern to every Canadian, from a security point of view, at this particular time.

So far as this bill is concerned, I would say that the observations of the member for Greenwood are very much in point. The advantage or otherwise of the bill will depend upon whether this industry can earn profits. That does not mean that the bill might not be of some help. My reason for raising the question at this time is that the delay in tabling the report denied the members an opportunity of considering it. This might have resulted in suggestions which might have been of benefit to this industry.

**Mr. Green:** During my remarks, I referred to the number and tonnage of Canadian ocean-going vessels of 1,000 tons or over, as appearing on page 18 of the report. Can the minister give us those figures up to October 31, 1949?

Will he also ascertain how many deep-sea cargo vessels, built in Canada for war purposes, are now under Canadian registry? How many merchant seamen are serving on the vessels in operation? A reply I received on October 15 indicated that at that time there were 118 vessels, 18 of which were not in

operation, and approximately 4,100 merchant navy men were still serving. I should like to have those figures brought up to date.

**Mr. Chevrier:** There is no change in that reply, except that there should be added the 58 vessels which are in the United Kingdom. Those will be returned in 1950.

**Mr. Green:** No more ships have been laid up?

**Mr. Chevrier:** I do not know what the date of that report was.

**Mr. Green:** October 15.

**Mr. Chevrier:** I think some ships have been laid up since then. At this time, the total number of ships laid up is 26.

I am afraid, Mr. Chairman, I am not able to give the figures my hon. friend requested earlier. If I gave them now, it would only be a guess. Perhaps I can get that information for him when we are considering the estimates of the Department of Transport.

**Mr. Green:** Will the minister say whether any progress has been made in the construction of faster cargo vessels for Canada? He said that approximately \$26 million had been put in escrow when it was received from the sale of slow ships. It would be interesting to know how much of that had been spent for new, faster cargo vessels.

**Mr. Chevrier:** In so far as deep-sea vessels are concerned, none of that amount has been spent. In so far as coastal and inland vessels are concerned, I do not know the exact amount, but a substantial amount of the escrow fund has been spent for that purpose.

**Mr. Green:** Have we any faster cargo vessels?

**Mr. Chevrier:** No.

**Mr. Green:** We have been told that the Canadian merchant marine have none at the moment. Is that correct?

**Mr. Chevrier:** None other than the three diesel vessels, owned by Canadian National Steamships, to which reference was made a moment ago.

Section agreed to.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Now that we are about to consider the other sections of the bill, may I remind hon. members of standing order 58, section 2, which reads as follows:

Speeches in committee of the whole house must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration.

I hope that all hon. members will adhere to this rule.

On section 2—*Definitions.*

**Mr. Green:** Is this help limited in any way to ocean-going vessels or is it available to any ship?