

as a hero because he obstructed this measure.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: I said I was following the example of the hero of the other side, who boasted at the last election that he had engaged in obstruction.

Mr. STEVENS: We recognize the heroism of the leader of the Government, but we do not recognize the heroism of right hon. gentlemen opposite. However, I have no hesitation in saying that this clause in my estimation does not go far enough towards discharging the obligations of the people of Canada in connection with naval defence. We should take into consideration the fact that the growing trade of Canada has, for the space of a hundred and fifty years, been protected by the Imperial navy without the cost of a dollar to the people of Canada. This being the case, I think it is time that we recognize that and gave some evidence of intention on our part to discharge that duty in a manner which would bring credit upon the country and would be commensurate with the obligation laid upon us. Not only do I think that it does not go far enough, but I have also another criticism in this regard. The clause reads, 'the said ships when constructed'. Now, I regret that the Government did not see fit to insert in that clause a term which would be tantamount to the word 'speedy,' which was inserted in the resolution of four years ago. I believe the action on this Bill should be taken at once. I have no doubt that is the intention of the Government, but I believe it would have been wise to have made in this Bill the declaration that this action should be taken immediately upon the passage of the measure. That is my second criticism. Furthermore, there is nothing in this Bill to show when these vessels are to be constructed. They may be constructed this year, they may be constructed next year. I presume that the intention of the Government respecting these vessels, is that they are to be constructed this year. I presume the object the Government has in view is as soon as this Bill has been passed, to enter into negotiation for the construction of these vessels. I may be permitted to make an observation or two in connection with the construction. We have had a great deal of criticism from hon. gentlemen opposite about the attitude taken by the Government from the fact that at the present time Canada is not equipped for the construction of vessels such as those to be constructed under the provisions of this Bill, and the Opposition have endeavoured to convey to the public mind the idea that the present Government are opposed to the establishment of ship-building in Canada. In the face of that statement I think it behooves hon. gentlemen on this side of the House, it is incumbent upon them, to

give an answer to such a statement. The Prime Minister stated himself clearly in his address to the House in presenting this Bill in the early part of the session, December 5, I think it was, that the Admiralty were prepared to co-operate with the Government for the promotion of shipbuilding in Canada.

At six o'clock, House resumed, and then took recess.

#### After Recess.

House resumed at eight o'clock and again went into Committee.

Mr. STEVENS: When the Committee rose at six o'clock, I was discussing the question of the construction of vessels and referring to clause 4 of this Bill. I had pointed out some weaknesses in the contentions of the members of the Opposition in connection with this very important phase of the question.

It has been contended by hon. gentlemen opposite that the construction of such vessels as those referred to in this Bill and in the amendment offered by the right hon. the leader of the Opposition is a comparatively simple matter. In my opinion one must be brought to one of two conclusions, either that the hon. gentlemen opposite have not given any serious attention to the matter or that they are not sincere in the contentions which are advanced in support of the position taken by them. They persistently state that the members of the Government and members on this side of the House are opposed to the promotion of shipbuilding in this country. They are seeking to make political capital by creating in the minds of the public the idea that we are opposed to the encouragement of shipbuilding. It was distinctly stated by the Prime Minister when he introduced this Bill that arrangements had been made with the Imperial authorities whereby definite and distinct encouragement would be given to shipbuilding in Canada. I contend that the attitude of the Government in that regard was a wise one. Our friends suggest that it is a comparatively simple thing to establish shipyards such as those referred to. They also contend that these shipyards should be established at once, as if a great shipyard were something that could be put in operation in the course of a few months or weeks. I had recently the privilege of inspecting the plant of the New York Shipbuilding Company of Camden, New Jersey. They have an excellent plant, but it has been only in recent years that they have been able to successfully handle large vessels. That plant has been established for something over fifteen years. It has taken fifteen years practically to build up the plant to its present dimensions and to