

and still more ships, many of us are dismayed by the hesitancy of Canada to leap forward with a practical and substantial shipbuilding policy—a shipbuilding policy labelled, "Ship Construction in Canada at Canada's Cost for Canada's War Services." That, it seems to me, would be timely action for a nation like Canada, that proudly and boldly stepped into the fighting ring and hurled defiance at Germany and Italy.

What is the radio news to-day from Canada's front line of defence, the British Isles? Three thousand eight hundred men, women and children killed in December and 7,000 others injured by German bombs.

And here we are in perfect safety, living on the fat of the land, while in England those who are not massacred must be content with reduced food rations. Why? Because the ships that were carrying food-stuffs have had to be diverted to the carrying of guns and munitions. Yet Canada hesitates, halts, and debates about building ships for Canada's war service.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Chas. E. Tanner.

Now, I do not want to repeat that, honourable members. That is the position I took with the department in January, 1941. The honourable leader on this side of the House has mentioned a return, brought down at my request, which shows that after the letting of the contracts mentioned in the return, twelve months elapsed before two ships were put into the salt water. The other day there came a report from Sir Lyman Duff about the Hong Kong expedition. It showed that we had to get a British ship to take our men to Hong Kong, and that we had to get an American ship to carry the mechanical appliances for that force. And that ship with the mechanical appliances was diverted, Sir Lyman said; so it did not reach Hong Kong. He stated:

This miscarriage was not in any way due to any fault or mistake of any officer of the Canadian Forces or of any official of the Canadian Government.

Certainly not. It was wholly the fault of the Government, not of its understrappers. The Government had no vision at all with regard to shipbuilding and ship supplies. It let month after month after month go by, and here we are to-day without ships, our ports crammed with goods. As Sir Lyman said, that is not the fault of the officials. It is the fault of the Government, because it had no vision of future requirements.

I want to say a word or two about this wooden-ship business. In the other Chamber honourable members tried to interest the Government in the construction of wooden bottoms. I took a little part in that too, because I saw wooden ships built, I saw them sail, I knew the commanders and the seamen on them when they sailed out of Nova Scotian ports, and I know they sailed to almost every port in South America, that

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they went to the Indian Ocean, to the North Sea, to New Zealand, to Australia, China, the Dutch Islands—in fact, almost everywhere—carrying all sorts of cargoes. But no one could interest this Department of Munitions and Supply in wooden ships. Apparently the head of that department said to himself: "It is better to be without ships, if we cannot get steel to build them, than to have wooden ships; better to let cargoes rot than to have wooden bottoms built to carry them to England and other parts of the Empire." That is the conclusion one would come to, because nobody could interest him in wooden ships. In the fall of 1939 and the winter of 1940 he could have had hundreds of wooden bottoms constructed in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island and on the Pacific coast, and they could have been carrying valuable cargoes. But no, nothing but steel bottoms would be satisfactory. And he was not building steel bottoms. After we actually embarked on the building of steel bottoms we got two ships in twelve months.

It may appear to be a waste of time to discuss these matters now, but I think the people have a right to know the facts. That is my justification for relating the facts. The people ought to understand why this shipbuilding business has not been carried on vigorously and successfully, as it should have been.

Hon. Mr. COPP. Would the honourable gentleman permit a question? He read an interesting letter that he wrote, with regard to shipbuilding, to a certain gentleman.

Hon. Mr. BALLANTYNE: Mr. Carswell.

Hon. Mr. COPP: I should like to inquire from my honourable friend if he received a reply, and, if so, what it indicated Mr. Carswell's reaction to be. My honourable friend has placed his letter on Hansard and I think it would be well to have the reply there too.

Hon. Mr. TANNER: I omitted to mention the reply, and I am glad my honourable friend has called my attention to it. In his reply the Controller denied that he made the statement. Later, when I was in Halifax, I checked up the matter with the management of the Chronicle, and they assured me that he did make the statement.

Hon. Mr. COPP: Then it is a question of veracity between the Chronicle and Mr. Carswell.

Hon. Mr. TANNER: Yes. Mind you, they are not political friends of mine.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read the second time.