

THE SENATE.

Tuesday, June 29, 1920.

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

SHIPBUILDING BILL.

CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE AND REPORTED.

On motion of Hon. Sir James Lougheed, the Senate went into Committee on Bill 199, an Act to assist Shipbuilding. Hon. Mr. Daniel in the Chair.

On section 1—conditions under which assistance may be given:

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: When this Bill was before the House yesterday, the argument that I understood the honourable leader of the Government to present to the House as the reason why the Bill should be accepted was that, as is stated in the preamble, "large numbers of men are employed in the shipbuilding industry in Canada," and there is danger that they may be laid off.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: No, I did not say that. I said that the industry had assumed very large proportions, and I mentioned the tonnage that was constructed and the number of men who were employed; but I did not make that the central fact.

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: My honourable friend does not fear that these men will be laid off necessarily?

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: I know nothing about that. But I did not base my statement on anything of that kind.

Hon. Mr. BOSTOCK: I rather misunderstood, possibly from the way my honourable friend put it. The list of different firms in Canada which I read to the House yesterday by whom at the present time ships are being built for the Government would, I suppose, be the firms that are to get the assistance under this Bill, if it goes into effect. The list that I read yesterday included only 15 different firms, and I think my honourable friend said that there were 17 altogether. Can he tell us who the other two firms are? I think this is an important matter which we should understand in order that we may not be subsidizing or encouraging new firms to start up in this business. As I understand the situation, we are being asked to pass this Bill for the purpose of helping the firms that are now in existence. If it is necessary to encourage the shipbuilding

industry in this country and to keep these firms employed, I do not think we should allow this assistance to be given to other firms that are not now building ships for the Government or are not in existence. I would ask my honourable friend if he can give us some information on this matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: No, the proposal does not necessarily relate exclusively to yards constructing Government ships, nor has it relation only to those yards which are now engaged in shipbuilding. The purpose is to assist shipbuilding generally.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I would draw the attention of my honourable friend to the preamble:

Whereas large numbers of men are employed in the shipbuilding industry in Canada; and whereas at the present time there is not sufficient demand for the construction of ships by Canadian purchasers and the Government of Canada has ceased placing further orders.

These employees the present shipbuilding yards are about to lay off because they have no orders. If that be so, is it not logical for my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Bostock) to ask if this means what it says—that these subsidies or these encouragements are for the purpose of keeping those shipyards going and not for the purpose of encouraging other yards to open and other companies to handle contracts? I should assume that that went without saying; but the answer given by the honourable leader of the Government astonishes me. It is not the logical answer. If the existing shipyards are about to close because there is not sufficient work for them, should not my honourable friend answer readily and without doubt that this proposal is for the encouragement or the maintenance of those yards and is not intended to help other groups to open shipyards?

Hon. JAMES DOMVILLE: Let us bring my honourable friend's attention to this. It is now late in the Session, and everybody is happy because of the increased indemnity. The Minister is happy and everybody else is happy. I do not know that the public are unhappy. I am sorry the other honourable member for St. John is not present, and I see very few New Brunswickers here to fight the cause of New Brunswick. What about St. John as a shipbuilding centre? There is an immense dock being built there at Courtenay bay—I was going to say, the biggest in the world, but certainly the biggest in America. Why cannot ships be built at St. John? There is a bar sinister on this. I do not say it is placed there