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Government Programme to Aid Shipping Industry

Plan to Guarantee Half the Cost of Building Ships by the Province to Be Operated Under Control of British Columbia.

The Hon. A. C. Flumerfelt, Minister of Finance, standing for the by-election today in Victoria, outlined in the campaign the government programme of aiding the shipping industry of the Province, and pointed out some of the benefits to be derived from both a shipbuilding and shipping industry in British Columbia. He said in part:

"I am urging with all the force I can the development of the shipping industry in Victoria and the coast of British Columbia. Already we are well advanced in our arrangements with Ottawa that will result in the construction here of 25 ships. This will be the beginning of an industry that will make of us a nation."

Mr. Flumerfelt gave details as to financing of the cost of the building of these ships. He said that if each ship cost \$125,000, fifty per cent of that sum would be guaranteed by the Government. This would be \$62,500. This amount would be paid off by five annual payments of \$10,000, with interest at 5 per cent, so that at the end of that time the Government would be free of any debt in connection with the ships.

"If we could ship all the lumber we could cut," the Minister said, "we would be very prosperous. We cut one billion feet a year. In Washington and Oregon they cut six billion, and their situation is the same as ours. They also are without shipping facilities. The chief point to be remembered in considering this is that all the lumber from this Coast could be sold if it could be moved."

"I stand here to say that this shipbuilding plan of the Government will be accomplished at the next session of the Legislature. It will then be brought into full operation within 30 days, as the ships are needed immediately. The Japanese nation is prepared to take from us each year \$5,000,000 worth of lumber, \$1,000,000 worth of wood pulp each month, not to mention 5,000,000 bushels of wheat each year, as soon as we have the shipping facilities. We can use these assets to make prosperity for us all."

"Some two or three weeks ago, when I had the pleasure of speaking before the Conservative Association, I

tried to draw a picture of the effect upon Pacific Coast ports—and those of British Columbia in particular—when the wheat areas of the northern country should come into a productive state. I referred especially to the land tributary to the Pacific Great Eastern and that portion of the Grand Trunk Pacific within the boundaries of British Columbia; also the extending of the road beyond Prince George, to connect with the MacArthur system. This latter should make a very large productive area, immediately

to the east and beyond the boundaries of British Columbia, tributary territory to the British Columbia roads.

"The three transcontinental railways are now taxed to their capacity to move the present crop of the Prairie Provinces, and when one considers that a few years ago, when the C. P. R. was the only line carrying east, difficulty was experienced in handling something under 200,000,000 bushels of wheat and other kindred products, is it not a fair supposition that in the not-distant future the presently existing roads will really have reached the limit of their carrying power?"

"The crop of last year was easily the greatest, by a very large percentage, ever harvested in the Prairie Provinces, and railway men tell me it will probably take the three systems at least six months in the ordinary course of operation to carry this product to its natural markets. We must also remember that not more than one-sixth of the arable area within these Prairie Provinces is presently under cultivation, and it is reasonable to assume that with the adjustment of the

war, large numbers of those who have been rendered homeless by reason of this world conflagration will seek the easiest, and possibly the cheapest, method of earning a livelihood.

"Therefore, in my opinion, it is inevitable that before many years the crop of the Prairie Provinces will at least have been doubled. If and when such an experience is had—indeed, long before the doubling of the crop—railway officials of long standing predict that a line drawn north and south, at or about Swift Current, will be the most westerly point from which our grains can be transported on a profitable and satisfactory basis to the Atlantic. Assuming that this is approximately correct, what must it mean to the railways running westward to Pacific ports, and what will

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