

Demobilization—Munitions and Supply

Mr. GREEN: What is the correct figure?

Mr. HOWE: On the sale of a Park ship?

Mr. GREEN: Yes.

Mr. HOWE: There is a formula that has been worked out for the Park ship and it is fairly standard in Canada and other countries. The Park ship that was built in 1944 cost about \$1,300,000, or \$1,400,000. It would be offered at about \$600,000.

Mr. GREEN: Then the article goes on to say:

There is indication that Park cargo ships sold in this deal will be at least partly replaced with bigger, faster craft—perhaps 15,000 tons—built in the United States.

Mr. HOWE: What paper is my hon. friend quoting from?

Mr. GREEN: A good paper, the Vancouver *Province*. The Minister of Veterans Affairs will agree with me in that.

Mr. HOWE: The pity about that paper is that it writes its own dispatches.

Mr. GREEN: I should like to know whether or not there is any basis of fact for that statement?

Mr. HOWE: Not the slightest.

Mr. GREEN: Can the minister assure us that the government policy on shipping will be such that Canada's merchant marine will be maintained at the strength that I mentioned earlier in my remarks?

Then we come to the question of shipbuilding. In each session in recent years there has also been discussion about shipbuilding. Now that the war is over, we face the problem on a peace-time basis. What is the government's policy? There have been very heavy lay-offs in shipbuilding. After the last war that industry died on the Pacific coast. We believe that it is a natural industry on our coast as well as on the St. Lawrence and on the Atlantic coast. We believe that the government policy should be devised to maintain shipbuilding in peace time and not let it fold up as it did twenty-five years ago. Various suggestions have been made; for example, some were made by the Shipyard General Workers' Federation of British Columbia about September of this year, and I think the same representations were made by unions from other parts of Canada. They suggest that long-term credit arrangements should be provided by the government to help shipyard operators who are anxious to accept shipbuilding orders from foreign gov-

[Mr. Howe.]

ernments who are unable to make the cash payments for new ships. Then they suggest the enactment of legislation to discourage shipowners from having ship repair work and new ship construction performed abroad. They also suggest the restriction of the Canadian coastal trade to vessels now registered in Canada and ships being built in Canada. Members familiar with shipping will know that many of the nations, including the United States, have a similar provision. I believe that no ship can be engaged in the coastal trade of the United States unless it is built and registered in that country. Finally they suggest the establishment of a central government body for the control of Canadian shipbuilding and shipping policies which shall include representatives of all sections of the industry, including labour. I take it that would be modeled on the United States maritime commission. I believe the minister said last year that some consideration was being given to the establishment of a commission of that type. Could he give us some statement on these two matters, shipping and shipbuilding?

Mr. HOWE: Of course, as far as shipping goes, it is impossible to operate more ships than one can obtain cargoes. My hon. friend suggests that we furnish shipping to take care of our exports. It is not so simple as that. Usually the buyer of the cargo determines the bottom that shall carry it. It would be much simpler to provide shipping to take care of our imports, because the buyer can specify the carrier of the cargo. However, we shall operate every ship, whether privately owned or publicly owned, for which cargoes can be found. If cargoes cannot be found the ship must be laid up. I think the United States have laid up something like twenty to twenty-five million tons already.

Mr. GREEN: They had a tremendous tonnage.

Mr. HOWE: We, too, have a fair tonnage in comparison. However, we are going to try to operate the ships. I have my doubts about the wisdom of changing our shipping laws at this time. We have built ships for Britain and Britain has built ships for Canada. At the moment we are building ships for several foreign governments. Whether this is the time to exclude the foreign built ships from our coastal trade I cannot say. There is only one country that does that, and it is the United States. When foreign shipping is excluded from coastal trade, it involves a