

Mr. REID: No, I said Halifax and St. John.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: And then going to the West Indies, to load up with sugar.

Mr. REID: That is on the route.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Let me adhere to the question whether these ships should or should not be a part of the Intercolonial railway. I say they should not. The question whether we should or should not encourage interprovincial trade between eastern and western Canada by means of subsidies, or building of boats for that special purpose is another question. I protest against the Intercolonial making an investment of \$600,000, with grand opportunities for adding to that investment every month thereafter, to develop trade between eastern Canada and the Pacific coast, where the Intercolonial has no connections whatever. I know the Minister of Railways is too good a business man to believe in his heart that this expenditure is justified upon that ground. I can understand the Intercolonial engaging in the building and operation of ships between Maritime Province ports and British ports. I think the time is near at hand when the Intercolonial must do that, and if they were in the position to purchase fifteen or twenty steamships to-day, of from 5,000 to 10,000 tons capacity, I believe it would be a good policy, and a logical enterprise for the Intercolonial to embark on. The route followed by these steamships would be but a continuation of the Intercolonial system. But, I submit, the operation of two steamboats between the Pacific coast and the Atlantic coast cannot in any sense be construed as a part of the operation of the Intercolonial.

The Minister of Railways justifies this vote on the ground that it is desirable to develop trade between the east and west coasts of Canada. That is a very interesting question. The proposal has merits, there is something to say in favour of it. But do not put it upon the Intercolonial; let it be a matter of national policy. Even if we were attempting to encourage trade between the east and west coasts of Canada, is this the right way to do it? Again I protest against Canada entering into the construction of wooden vessels for this purpose. In the first place, these vessels seem to be very expensive. You are asking us to vote \$600,000 for two ships of 2,500 tons each, which would mean a cost of \$125 per ton.

[Mr. A. K. Maclean.]

Mr. PUGSLEY: The machinery would cost \$110,000.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: The total cost completed would be \$125 per ton. I know of instances, within twelve months, where ships of a greater tonnage than this, more suitable for this trade, could have been purchased at about \$125 per ton. It is true, they were boats engaged in the lake trade in the United States, and some changes would have to be made in them. A great deal of tonnage was available for purchase in the United States within the last eighteen months. During the last three or four years there was, perhaps, not the same amount of tonnage offered. I know that the Dominion Coal Company bought tonnage within fifteen months for about \$80 per ton. The vessels were not very large but suited the company. You can enter into contracts to-day, I think, for steel boats for about \$125 a ton.

Mr. REID: No.

Mr. CURRIE: Come off.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I do not admit that my hon. friend from North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) is an authority on these matters.

Mr. CURRIE: How many tons of plate and steel is there in a vessel of this size?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I could not tell you.

Mr. CURRIE: About 3,000 tons.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I could not tell you that, but within the last two months contracts have been entered into for the construction of steel ships in the United States for \$155 to \$160 per ton.

Mr. CURRIE: When were they to be completed?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: To be completed as soon as possible—within a year.

Mr. REID: The hon. gentleman said \$160?

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Yes.

Mr. REID: I may say that, within the last year, the lowest price of any contract I have heard of was \$160 a ton. I have not heard of any within the last two years, either in the United States or in Canada, at \$125.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: You can enter into contracts to-day for the construction of steel ships somewhere between \$155 and \$160 a ton.