

fifth position amongst the countries of the world in regard to the tonnage of vessels. I am afraid that now we do not occupy the same important position. This is probably due to the fact that in the meantime a change has been made in the construction of ships. Instead of having wooden ships plying upon our rivers, our lakes and on the ocean we see almost everywhere iron ships. Canada does not seem to have made, in connection with the shipbuilding industry, the same progress that has been made in some other industries. But it is to be hoped that we are not very far from the day when Canada will realize the importance of increasing her shipbuilding and of trying to recover the proud position which she occupied some years ago when wooden ships were constructed. This question is engaging the consideration of the government and at the next session we will probably be in a position to announce the policy of the government in regard to it.

Mr. A. E. KEMP (East Toronto). Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the question which the hon. member for Hants (Mr. Black) has raised does not only refer to the encouragement of shipbuilding, but it also refers to the operation of ships whether we build them or not. It seems that the laws which exist in reference to shipping on the sea-board are different from those which exist in reference to shipping on the inland waters of Canada. On the inland waters it is impossible for foreign vessels to participate in the coasting trade. A United States vessel cannot ply between two Canadian ports and do business locally nor can a Canadian vessel ply between two American ports and do local business. But, I should judge from the remarks of the hon. member for Hants that it is possible under British law regarding shipping for foreign vessels to engage in the coasting trade on the Atlantic sea-board.

Mr. FIELDING. Not American.

Mr. KEMP. No, but ships of European nations. It seems ridiculous that the coasting trade of Canada can be done by the cheap labour of Europe and that the more highly paid labour of the United States is debarred. Even if there were no law against it, it is not likely the Americans would participate in our sea-board coasting trade because they would not likely be able to compete with our own sailors. Is it impossible under an imperial statute, to put the same restrictions against European as against American shipping in this case?

Mr. FIELDING. You could not do so because of an existing imperial treaty; but of course these treaties may have to be reconsidered. The United States will not give us their coasting trade and we reciprocate by refusing our coasting trade to them, but under a treaty with the imperial

Mr. BRODEUR.

government, Canadian ships can do coasting trade in Norway. What value the coasting trade of Norway may be to Canada is a debatable question. Whether we get fair return from Norway for the privilege we give them is a question worthy of consideration.

Mr. L. P. DEMERS (St. John and Iberville). The condition in regard to this question is one of the inconveniences of the colonial regime. Under the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, the colonies are permitted to change certain provisions of the Act, but they are not permitted to change the clauses which relate to treaties made by Great Britain, and as Norway has a treaty with the mother country, we cannot prevent her ships coasting in Canada. This treaty has not been made on behalf of Canada, but on behalf of Great Britain, which is of course doing a coasting trade in Norway. Canada does not do any such trade and we consequently suffer. It is one of these treaties that should be denounced by the imperial authorities.

Mr. KEMP. I think so.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN. All these treaties are subject to revision and Canada is in a position to-day to say to the home government that certain treaties which are against the interests of Canada should be denounced, and that Canada should no longer lie under the disabilities they impose. It is up to the government of the day to see that these disabilities are removed. Some years ago this government promised that they would take up the question of encouraging ship building in Canada, but so far that promise has not been implemented. Nova Scotia ought to be the seat of a great ship-building industry not only for Canada, but for all the American continent; she has the iron, she has the coal, she has the men to build the ships and the men to sail the ships. All that is needed is some kind of encouragement in the line of a national policy and some kind of bounty paid by the State on the building of ships. If Canada is ever to have a great marine we must encourage ship-building. We have encouraged the iron industry and it has grown; we have given protection to a number of manufacturing industries and they have all grown and the national policy has vindicated itself. We should extend that policy in every possible direction, and to the ship-building industry amongst others. I believe that Canada could well afford to build in the maritime provinces the first of a big fleet of Atlantic steamers to compete with the existing transatlantic lines, and that can be done if the government gives encouragement. It would pay this country to put the fastest line of express steamers on the Atlantic service under some kind of government encouragement and subsidy. If that were done