

Mr. J. A. CURRIE. Is it not a fact that the ship had reached the limit of her usefulness in the British navy, that the cost of her upkeep was very great and everything about her antiquated? The Prime Minister has stated that her guns were of 40 calibre. As I understand it, no vessel now is armed with guns of less than 50 calibre. Another thing, I understand that she is fitted with Belleville boilers. Now, these boilers are no longer used in the British navy. As a matter of fact, we have had two ships on the lakes with Belleville boilers. These were vessels of the Great Northern Railway Company—the J. J. Hill road—the Northwest and the Northland, and, as a matter of fact, these boilers were constantly out of commission, tubes bursting and scalding people. That class of boilers is now antiquated, and no longer used to any extent in the navy. In fact, they constitute a grave danger, so that it is now all the navy can do to get a stoker to go into the stokehole with Belleville boilers because of the danger of being scalded to death. The annual upkeep of this machinery is something that the government should have inquired into. What is the use of getting a vessel the upkeep of whose machinery in a few years will cost as much as would pay for the machinery of a new ship? The right hon. Prime Minister knows that even the new vessels that have been bought cost from \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year for upkeep. What is the use of buying junk? In a short time, this vessel would have been thrown out. She would have been taken out to sea, her guns thrown overboard, and the vessel herself brought back and sold for junk for \$5,000 or \$10,000. But this government pays hundreds of thousands, if not millions, for this kind of stuff.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I do not think that the information of the hon. member (Mr. J. A. Currie) is correct. He is a land warrior, not a sea warrior. And he gets his naval information from the lakes, apparently. The 'Niobe' was bought for a training ship, and I understand she will serve the purpose admirably, and that the price we pay for her, \$1,075,000, is a very cheap price. We have got more than value for our money. Of course, I do not pretend to speak with authority in these matters. The ship has steamed many miles within the last three months, and is still in active service. I do not know that a vessel commissioned in 1902 ought to be regarded as fit only for the scrap heap in 1910. However, as I say, I do not speak with authority. The only thing I know is that the purchase of the ship has been advised by the officer in charge of the department at the present time, who is our expert officer, who knows all about the 'Niobe' and certifies that she is an admirable ship

for the purpose for which she has been bought.

Mr. J. A. CURRIE. Who is that officer?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Admiral Kingsmill.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. Was she bought as a training ship or as a fighting ship?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. As a training ship.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. How many men can be trained on board this ship or on the 'Rainbow'?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. Four hundred and forty men and forty officers can be trained on the 'Niobe' and 'Rainbow' together.

Mr. H. H. McLEAN. I would direct the attention of the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. J. A. Currie) to the volume I have here which will give him full information respecting the 'Niobe.' If he consults that, I think he will be quite satisfied that the government is not buying a piece of junk. For instance, she is put down here as a protected first-class cruiser—this is the latest naval annual, 1909—and the vessel would not be so entered unless she bore that class. That is her present position in the navy, a protected first-class cruiser.

Mr. J. A. CURRIE. The hon. gentleman wants us to take the authority of the Navy Annual. I would advise him to look up the Navy League Annual, where he will find this ship at the bottom of the list. That means that in another year she goes off the map altogether. The hon. gentleman knows that perfectly well.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The Annual gives 325 men for the 'Niobe,' and 90 for the 'Rainbow,' making a total of 405 men that can be trained on these two ships.

Mr. J. D. REID. How were these vessels purchased? Did the Minister of Marine and Fisheries negotiate the purchase himself? It is a well known fact that the government have been purchasing vessels on the other side these last few years instead of purchasing them in Canada. Last session, when I suggested that Collingwood or Toronto should get the contract for the vessel that was ordered for the fishery protective service, the Finance Minister told me that the reason the government could not have it built in Canada was because the tender price in Canada was \$15,000 more than the contract price for which they were getting the vessel in England. And yet the government were practically receiving about \$15,000 in duties. I will give you the reason why I ask this question. I understood at the time, I think from the Minister of Marine and Fisher-