

Supply—Transport

spoke the other evening I did not know that the section under which I spoke would have been reached so early; otherwise I would have brought this with me. But it seems to me that with the international joint commission lies the remedy. The international joint commission made the order approving of the project but subject to the protection of the rights of the local people, the rights particularly of navigation. They are clearly set out in this order and they cannot be ignored. It seems to me that if those representations are brought to the attention of the international joint commission they will be given immediate consideration.

However, if perchance they are not then I would suggest that those groups and interests in the city of Cornwall who are interested, and I am sure most of them are, need only make a public application to the international joint commission and the commission will I am sure do in 1960 what it did in 1952, that is go down to the court house in the city of Cornwall and listen to the representations which will be made. In the light of this document it is quite clear to me that there should be no difficulty about solving the problem of the proper velocity of water going through the canal in the city of Cornwall.

Mr. Winch: Mr. Chairman, I admit I do not know much, if anything, about the difference of opinion between the previous speaker and the hon. member for Stormont. However, I do appreciate the opportunity which has been given by this administration vote under these estimates to raise a matter which is of great interest to myself, as a member of this house from British Columbia, and a matter of grave concern to Victoria and Vancouver. I would be very appreciative if the minister could give us a picture and an understanding of the allocation of shipbuilding contracts which come under the jurisdiction of his department.

In both the first world war and the second world war the shipbuilding industry of British Columbia was of prime and major importance. From my attendance at meetings of other committees I have learned that the Department of National Defence and the Department of Defence Production feel that the shipbuilding industry of British Columbia and its potentialities are still of major importance to them. Therefore, the Department of National Defence and the Department of Defence Production do have a policy, small as it may be, of letting contracts on the coast.

I am most interested in learning the attitude of the minister toward the construction of vessels under his jurisdiction. I want to be exceedingly fair, as I hope I always am.

[Mr. Chevrler.]

During the past few months I have received a great many letters from the unions in Victoria and Vancouver which are connected with the shipbuilding industry making certain points and putting forward certain facts. Having received those letters I felt it was my responsibility to contact certain shipbuilding firms in British Columbia and I want to express my gratitude now for the comprehensiveness of the replies I received from those firms.

As I said, I wish to be fair, so I will point out that I was informed by one of the shipbuilding concerns in British Columbia that over the years prices quoted on tenders have been between 12 and 20 per cent higher than those of shipyards in eastern Canada. The shipyard operators in British Columbia also point out that there are various problems to be considered, one of them being the wage rate in British Columbia. Using the figures which have been supplied to me it appears that a joiner's rate at a shipbuilding yard in Quebec is \$1.86 an hour; at Canadian Vickers Limited it is \$1.91, while in Victoria and Vancouver it is \$2.50. In addition, the shipbuilders in British Columbia point out that they are up against the problem of freight rates on steel and other material which must be sent from eastern Canada to British Columbia.

However, I also wish to draw this to the minister's attention that my information has been confirmed that at the time of the construction of the latest destroyer escort in a British Columbia yard it was stated by a high official in Ottawa that the man-hour production record for construction was the finest in all Canada. So here is the position: the British Columbia yards have the highest wages in Canada, and I would most certainly not recommend that they be lowered; they are up against the problem of additional freight costs for steel and various components which have to be moved across Canada. Then, again, they hold, according to the record, the most productive man-hour rate in Canada. We must also consider that according to the Minister of National Defence and according to the policy of the Department of Defence Production it is in the interest of Canada both in war and in peace that the shipyard industry of British Columbia should be maintained.

In view of this I should like to ask the Minister of Transport whether it is always his policy with regard to the construction of ships, ferries, dredgers or anything else that comes under his control, that the lowest tender should be accepted, or is consideration given to an over-all plan connected with the maintenance of shipbuilding, repair