

*Coasting Trade and Commercial Marine Activities Act*

As it presently stands, Americans will be able to do business in our waters on American-built ships while Canadians do not have the same cabotage rights. While we welcome the legislative initiative, we had hoped that it would have been more in tune with American law which states that domestic trade between United States ports must be carried out by vessels which are registered in the United States, owned by Americans, built in the United States, and the employees of the shipyards and the crews must be American citizens.

We had hoped that the Conservative Government, while still hungry for a free trade deal, would have had sufficient courage to say to the Americans, enough. We had hoped that the Government would have found the vision and sufficient commitment to Canada to say to the Americans; we gave you our railways through the deregulation act, Bill C-18, we gave you FIRA in the early stage of the Conservative administration, and we just gave you our pharmaceutical industry. All of this was attempting to placate you and convince you that Canadians are good sports. Enough is enough. Our shipbuilding industry is ours, and we will protect it. Ease your barriers to trade in this area and we will ease ours.

[*Translation*]

Unfortunately, the Minister of Transport and this Conservative Government did not have the courage to do so. The Minister of Transport chose the middle ground. He provides some protection, but the Americans and other foreign shippers will still be able to operate in Canada at the expense of our own Canadian industry.

Mr. Speaker, I shall not dwell on this issue for too long. I presume that there will be ample opportunity to come back to it when the Bill goes to committee, where we shall be examining closely each amendment and each clause of this Bill.

However, I would like to come back to the weak commitment of this Conservative Government as concerns the Canadian shipbuilding industry. Hon. Members will probably remember that the Conservative Government approached Mr. Pierre-Paul Saunders, President of Versatile Davie Shipyard, which operates a shipyard in Lauzon, and required, in return for a contract, that he rationalize the operations of Quebec shipyards and, in particular, that he close the Montreal shipyard.

I see the Minister of Trade has just left his seat. I wish he had stayed in his place because I wanted to ask him if he was doing a serious thing when he called on the president of a company which owned a number of shipyards in Canada for the purpose of pressuring him and telling him: We as a Government will give you a contract, provided you rationalize your operations and close down one shipyard, because we in the Government feel there are too many shipyards in Canada and it has become difficult to get enough contracts to go around, in order to meet the needs of a few thousand workers in the various shipyards across Canada.

The evidence is there, clear and undeniable, that this Tory Government has attempted to close down shipyards in Canada, and more especially the Montreal shipyard. The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart), my colleague, rose in vain on a number of occasions in this House to defend the interests of workers in the Montreal shipyard.

I must therefore suggest that, speaking of commitments to Canadian shipyard workers, that one is no great shakes. Because last year, Mr. Henry Walsh, who at that point was Chairman of the Canadian Shipyard Association, had this to say:

"Our recommendations, requests and appeals to the Government during the past 17 months have remained unanswered". "Shipowners keep on buying abroad, taking advantage of subsidies and favourable financing terms that they do not find here in Canada". "Since the 1984 elections,

since this Tory Government was elected,

we have on a number of occasions called the Government's attention to our desperate situation, but in vain"

added Mr. Walsh, who at the same time published a number of letters and telexes sent to this Tory Government. And to quote him again:

"Those one-way communications show how much the Government has failed to honour its commitments, is looking for excuses and going back on its word—

Mr. Speaker, that suggestion is not mine, it came from the Chairman of the Canadian Shipyard Association, who says this Tory Government

"—has failed to honour its commitments, is looking for excuses and going back on its word. It is time the public was informed of the situation before a larger number of shipyards and related industries are forced to shut down. The industry is going down the drain while the Conservative Government remains inactive and unconcerned".

"Canada is the only shipbuilding nation not to offer attractive financing facilities and not to reserve Government contracts to its own industry. Our nearest neighbour, the United States, totally forbids importing foreign-built ships". "The Government should realize that the ships we need should be built in Canada, so that our shipbuilding firms may survive the world crisis the industry is now in."

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Conservative Government has chosen to ignore these pressing requests from the President of the Canadian Shipbuilding Association.

We have heard the silly statements made by the Hon. Member for Lévis (Mr. Fontaine) who managed to convince his constituents that under a Conservative Government, they would all become affluent and that the Lauzon shipbuilding yards would be awarded a whole series of contracts, while in fact there are fewer and fewer workers at the Lauzon yard.

Recently, my colleague—for the information of the public which is watching us, I had better give the name of his riding, for our Standing Order does not allow me to call him by his name—the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan) rose in the House to direct a question to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McInnes) and also to ask the Government why it was not keeping the promises it had made to the workers of the Maritime shipbuilding yard. Our colleague the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys could bear witness to the fact that the number of workers