

*Pilotage Act*

indispensable security factor, because it is well known that traffic is growing heavier within Canadian territorial waters and one quickly must conclude that whatever the size of a ship, small, medium or large, its presence within our waters and in vital pilotage zones may spell great danger.

While studying this legislation in committee, we suggested some amendments. Notwithstanding all the amendments that were made, it is a fact that perhaps some of the people concerned still entertain apprehensions or misgivings about that bill.

In my view, the bill, in its present form, including some corrections to which I would like to draw the minister's attention, is of great importance and represents considerable progress, unless one would want to consider future authorities as incompetent. The bill is an answer to a long-standing need and it attempts to ensure, within Canadian waters, real control of the safety of pilotage.

The previous speaker praised our Canadian pilots. I wish to say that I agree with him wholeheartedly and to add that it is not merely a question of ensuring employment security for an important group of workers—I would say of professionals in the field of shipping—but rather of really understanding to what extent the role which these people have played in the past and will have to play in the future, is pressing and important since we passed Bill C-2 on pollution.

I recently read in a Quebec newspaper an article on the consequences of a ship running aground or of a maritime disaster which could happen at the level of Portneuf, or elsewhere in the St. Lawrence river, up to the Escoumains or Rimouski, because it must be understood to what extent, through tidal movements, a disaster in the river would bring about irreparable and widespread damage.

In the consideration of this legislation we insisted more on the necessity, not to keep pilots but to insure aboard ships sailing in our waters the presence of men whose competence will be controlled by local authorities or by the department, emphasizing the increasing importance of this matter. Some people might feel that clause 14 will enable local authorities to establish new compulsory pilotage areas. However, I fail to see how compulsory pilotage areas could be established in our Canadian waters, where traffic density is very great. In fact, experience has shown that only experts have the qualifications required to conduct ships in these areas.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation provides for establishment of local authorities for the purpose of decentralizing pilotage. To this end, we must choose one of two courses. We can have everything included in the act. Then, it would seem that we do not trust the authority to be set up. On the other hand, we may accept the principle of decentralisation and put our faith in the authority to be set up, with the understanding that the local authority will be closer to the actual problems of navigation and will obviously be more competent to pass judgment on the qualifications of those that are to hold pilotage certificates.

[Mr. Lafamme.]

So, as proposed in the bill, I chose to trust the local authority and believe in the regulations that will be set up and published for 30 days in the *Canada Gazette* under clause 14.

As far as compulsory navigation zones and regulations concerning the qualifications of pilotage certificate holders are concerned, these regulations should be given a 30-day public notice and be subject to investigation.

• (2:20 p.m.)

Within such a framework, I can hardly imagine how the local authorities of the Montreal area, for instance, could intervene while the shipping traffic continues to increase and say or direct that there will be no compulsory pilotage, from Quebec City to Escoumains and that it will not be necessary that a certificate holder be on board one or another of the ships which will negotiate the distance.

Under section 14(1)a), it will be possible to awake the public interest and show that it is out of the question to make shipping completely free within our waters.

It is a known fact, Mr. Speaker, that all countries require that a pilot steer the ships travelling in their territorial waters. The reaction to the Darling report is also known. That report, which the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) tabled in the House on May 21 last, has been concurred in by almost all ship owners because it made the specific recommendation that Canadian ships be responsible for coastal navigation in territorial waters.

If we are so convinced that it is essential to promote coastal shipping by Canadian vessels, I can easily understand why members of the Committee on Transport and Communications urged that pilotage certificate holders be Canadian citizens or immigrants having filed their citizenship application. The requirement was approved and when I refer to the favourable reaction to the publication of the Darling report recommending that only Canadian ships move goods between ports, I wish to make it clear that it was important to guarantee that Canadians pilot ships in important inland waters called compulsory pilotage areas.

On the whole, that legislation can give rise to some concern. Literally, that legislation could suggest that the local authority, the minister or the cabinet could enact regulations altering its meaning. As a result, we would be introducing a bill to delude the public and I cannot accept such argument. I trust—and I say so in all fairness—the Minister of Transport and his advisers, but Parliament would always be in a position to enact other regulations. However, for the moment I am convinced that the Minister of Transport is quite determined to carry out to the letter the general instructions which will have been recommended to cabinet and included in regulations made by local authorities created once the bill has been approved.

There, actually, is my idea of this law. And if the authorities are not trusted, one may, obviously, through reluctance or by playing with terms, interpret certain clauses as meaning that indeed the cabinet has the power to establish a parallel pilotage system and to get rid of the present system.