

*Canada Shipping Act*

to the operation of the Seaway may force that kind of an action.

The Manitoba Pulse Growers Association Inc. suggested:

Since the Government has expressed a desire to increase exports by this nation, it appears contradictory to that desire to increase freight costs for the exporters.

Increased freight costs on the St. Lawrence will see more U.S. grain being directed down the Mississippi, with the predictable results being lower over-all St. Lawrence freight handle and even higher part-time costs to Canadian producers.

It is important that Canadian seaways, particularly the St. Lawrence Seaway, be used to the maximum. The more people we can get to use it, the lower the costs will be. But we have a situation where the Government is putting in a user-pay philosophy which will increase freight costs and force the users to look for alternative cheaper routes, such as using trucks or sending their goods to the West Coast or down the Mississippi.

I recommend that the Government support at least these minor changes in Clause 4 so that we will have some control over the possibility of increased freight on the Seaway if the Minister uses the powers he is given in this clause.

● (1710)

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to make submissions with respect to Bill C-75. Bill C-75 has 111 pages and is a rather extensive piece of legislation. When it was referred to the legislative committee, the preoccupation of the committee was Clause 4. In fact, I am advised that the bulk of the discussion in the legislative committee dealt with that clause and its controversial nature. For the record, Clause 4, subsection 3.1 (1) reads:

For the purpose of defraying the cost of services provided by the Canadian Coast Guard, the Governor in Council may make regulations respecting charges relating to those services, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, aids to navigation, sounding and dredging, vessel traffic services, icebreaking services and marine aid.

That means that the Government of Canada now intends to impose a user fee system with respect to the services provided by the Canadian Coast Guard. Until today the operational costs involved in providing all the necessary services provided by the Canadian Coast Guard have been borne by the taxpayers of Canada generally. The Government now intends to introduce a system whereby those who own boats in Canada will pay for the cost of the Canadian Coast Guard.

The Liberal Opposition has objected on a number of grounds and I would like to reiterate those objections. However, before doing so, I would like to take a moment to analyse why the Conservative Government is changing the system which is now in place. We need not analyse it too deeply to understand the philosophy behind this particular amendment to the Canada Shipping Act. Given the record of the Conservative Government over the last 20 months, we know that it is paranoid about the federal deficit. It is equally obvious that the Conservative Government is prepared to do anything to reduce that deficit.

During the last 20 months we found that the Government of Canada was prepared to reduce the deficit on the backs of the disadvantaged in society. In one case the Government attempted to deindex the pensions of senior citizens in the name of deficit reduction. There have been numerous other examples of the Government of Canada targeting specific groups in society to participate in deficit reduction. The Government of Canada is now targeting the ship and vessel owners in Canada to help reduce the deficit.

In the last fiscal year the cost of the Canadian Coast Guard was approximately \$825 million. The Government now wants the authority to defray the cost of administering the Canadian Coast Guard services. It would like the opportunity to charge ship owners a particular fee. It is, as well, asking for the authority to charge recreational boat owners a user fee. Anyone paddling a canoe down the Humber River or the Don River in Toronto, or on Lake Ontario would be subject to a charge if the Government is given the authority which it seeks through Clause 4. That is quite clear from the legislation.

We ask whether that is appropriate and fair. Do Canadians agree in principle with the concept of user pay? It is my submission that Canadians do not support the principle of user pay in a general sense. If one were to extend that principle, only motorists would pay the costs of road repair.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I address myself to the question of relevancy. It is the tradition, under the new parliamentary rules, to insist on some degree of relevancy at report stage. I do not ask the Hon. Member to apologize for his inability to inform himself with respect to the content of the amendment before us, but I do ask you, who are aware, to insist on some reasonable degree of relevancy.

**Mr. Marchi:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on that point of order. I would like to apologize for the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Speaker, because he has risen to interrupt the debate and to interrupt Members of the House. I would ask you to impose some sort of discipline upon the Member, who is not raising a point of order.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** There is no need to hear from the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) on a point of order. I will recognize the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata) on the point of order.

**Mr. Nunziata:** Mr. Speaker, in my submission I was attempting to assess the philosophy behind Clause 4 of Bill C-75. This is extremely important in order to understand the motivation behind the Government's intention to implement a user-pay system for the owners of vessels and ships using the waters in Canada.

**Mr. Forrestall:** We are talking about the amendment. Address yourself to the amendment.

**Mr. Nunziata:** The Parliamentary Secretary does not appear to have the common courtesy to listen to other Members of Parliament who are attempting to make submissions. He will