

Canada Shipping Act

those rigs, taking those risks, are primary producers. On February 18, 1982, disaster struck. The *Ocean Ranger* went down, every man was lost, and Governments jointly decided we had to find out why this unsinkable rig, the *Ocean Ranger*, went down. What happened? The Government appointed a royal commission jointly funded by both the Government of Newfoundland and the Government of Canada. That royal commission spent \$15 million over three years and it travelled the length and breadth of the globe and of the country examining the operation of rigs in the offshore, examining the training systems, examining the management systems, trying to make a determination about how we could improve the operation of rigs in our offshore, how we could prevent, as civilized people, another disaster in our offshore. It examined how we, as parliamentarians, could offer our citizens at sea, those primary producers extracting that resource, that energy means from the ocean, a safe system in what is obviously a very dangerous occupation.

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We knew, and the people who go out to sea in the rigs know that there are never any guarantees of safety. They know when you put men and equipment up against the North Atlantic that there is never any guarantee. They know that their lives are always at risk, even as we speak today and six rigs are operating off the East Coast of Canada.

In so far as the risk exists, we understand we have a responsibility to give them the best possible equipment and systems available to prevent disaster, and in the event of disaster, to ensure that rescue can be carried out. So the royal commission was appointed. It did its job. It spent \$15 million and it made recommendations to the Government of Canada and to the Government of Newfoundland as to what should happen to prevent another such disaster.

Members should know that one of the major recommendations, if not the major recommendation, of the royal commission, was that when next the Canada Shipping Act, which is the Act we are dealing with today, was examined before Parliament, examined before the Standing Committee of Transport, oil rigs should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport and should be included under the regulations provided for in the Canada Shipping Act.

Canadians would be amazed to know that while a barge with no people aboard which floats down the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, or is used to dump garbage, is included in the Canada Shipping Act and, therefore, is subject to all the regulations of the Canada Shipping Act, an oil rig with 100 people aboard is not. I think the people of Canada would be interested in knowing that a crane that would operate on the waterfront doing repairs would be included and subject to all the provisions of the Canada Shipping Act, but an oil rig is not.

The royal commission said that one of the main causes of the disaster and the reason for the loss of 84 men, 69 Canadians, 56 Newfoundlanders, according to the *Ocean Ranger*

report completed in August of 84, was a breakdown of the command structure in the final hours preceding the sinking of the oil rig. The main contributing factor to this breakdown was the fact that the captain, who commands the oil rig when the rig and crew are in danger, did not have the proper qualifications to avoid what transpired.

In other words, all those vessels that are covered under the Canada Shipping Act that navigate the oceans of Canada must have a command structure as laid down by the Canada Shipping Act. They must have qualified, certified personnel as laid down by the Canada Shipping Act, but an oil rig continues to be under the of the Minister of Energy.

As I touched on yesterday, what is tragic about the exclusion of oil rigs and the lack of an acknowledgement of the recommendation of the royal commission in this Bill is that there is not a Member of this House in good conscience who does not believe that oil rigs should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Transport. The Minister of Transport believes that, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Forrestall) believes that, every Member that I know from an oil-producing region believes that, regardless of Party, but still it has not happened. It has not happened despite the will of Parliament, it has not happened despite the will of a royal commission.

I suppose we spent that \$15 million for some serious reason. I suppose that generally when we have people study a matter for three years, we take their advice seriously. I suppose we are not arrogant enough to second guess a group of experts who have spent three years of their lives dedicated to one task. Despite all of that, no jurisdiction over oil rigs is mentioned in Bill C-75.

Why is that? It is because there is in this place a disposition toward empire building. It is because, for the moment, oil rigs rest under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Energy (Miss Carney). They are part of her kingdom. I said that this place is a little bit like Rome, but it is a very competitive Rome, there are 40 Caesars, 40 Ministers of the Cabinet, more than ever before in the history of this country. It is the largest single Cabinet in Canada's history. We have a Minister of Energy who has decided that every part of the energy patch, in so far as Government is concerned, shall be under her jurisdiction. We have a Minister of Energy who has said to the Minister of Transport that he can sit on the joint committee and consult with her on how she manages the operation of those rigs in the offshore, but notwithstanding the recommendations of a royal commission that spent \$15 million, she shall retain the ultimate authority. She is not going to give it up to the Minister of Transport no matter how logical, no matter how much advice she received, no matter what the will of Parliament.

Frankly, I find that tragic. The reality is that even though improvements have been made in the operation of rigs off the East Coast of this country, some of the very same systems that were in place on the night of February 18, 1982 when the *Ocean Ranger* went down and 84 lives were lost, are in place