

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

lives of employees. The other view is that minimum safety levels should be established by regulation and promulgated by the Governor in Council.

I have here an editorial entitled "No Bargaining Issue" dealing with that meeting which I should like to read into the record. It reads as follows:

The intermittent series of meetings between government, ship owners and maritime union leaders designed to make the St. Lawrence a safer place for shipping has finally, warily, approached the issue of manning. There were no visible bruises after the meeting. But it was quite apparent that if the shipping industry is not to bog down in collective bargaining over what is primarily a safety matter, the government simply must legislate minimum standards and provide more adequate inspection services.

Employers and unions are miles apart on the issue. The former accuse labour of selfishly trying to promote over-manning to collect more dues. The unions maintain that under-manning demands too much from individuals, that the consequent physical exhaustion brings danger or worse. Existing regulations certainly are so vague as to be almost meaningless, and overlook the possibility that what might constitute adequate manning while a ship is moving normally has little relation to loading and unloading operations.

There has been a lot of buck passing on the issue. Specific complaints to shipping inspectors have brought replies that manning is a trade union matter. Yet in reporting on a local case a few years ago, H. Carl Goldenberg, chairman of a conciliation board, refused to touch the question of personnel on the grounds that it related to seaworthiness, a subject governed by statute.

Sweeping technical changes gradually creeping into the shipping industry mean that fewer men will be needed to keep vessels moving efficiently. But manning must always be keyed to the abnormal because safety is the guide line. And it is up to government to establish the rules. Safety is not a matter for the bargaining table.

I commend to the government the thought contained in that editorial from the *Montreal Star* of Saturday, November 19. I hope that when the minister replies he will be able to make a firm and concrete announcement about government plans in the field of the establishment of minimum safety scales and manning levels as they relate to the safety of seamen working on ships.

Hon. John N. Turner (Acting Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in the three minutes accorded to me under the rules I will not be able to make the extensive statement which the hon. member seeks. May I say that at the latest of a series of five meetings being held at Dorval under the auspices of the Department of Transport involving members of the industry and the unions concerned the subject matter was the manning of ships in relation to

[Mr. Howard.]

safety criteria. I believe that the number of casualties along the St. Lawrence river channel, even though small in proportion to the amount of traffic handled, has now reached such a point that the government will have to intervene, as it has quite actively over the past year.

I think that the hon. member, who attended one or two of the meetings, will agree that we have taken a great step forward in traffic control in the use of walkie-talkies aboard ships, in the installation of a permanent network along the St. Lawrence river, in setting up the study of twin channels below Quebec, in the modernization of certification and training methods, and now in this particular provision with regard to manning.

The question of manning involves two aspects. The first is safety; the second is automation and its corollary of job security, which is properly a matter for collective bargaining. What we are dealing with here is the fact that automation has now reached such a stage in the shipping industry that crews could conceivably be reduced to such a minimum that safety standards would be jeopardized.

We are not dealing here with the total strength of crews, their hours of work or their welfare benefits, which are still properly a matter for collective bargaining between the industry and unions concerned, but rather with the number of men on watch, the number of men at alert at any one time, and also the number of hours worked by any one man over a given period, which brings into play the fatigue factor.

So we are not talking about manning requirements in general; this still remains a matter for collective bargaining. We are not talking about technological change on the one hand and job security on the other. We are talking of manning as it affects the safety of the crew and the ship. We are talking of the number of men on watch and at alert, not only during ordinary conditions of sailing but also during emergency conditions, men in sufficient number to safely man the ships. Since emergency conditions must be predicted we are also talking of emergency conditions as they potentially affect the safety of crews.

I hope that eventually the Minister of Transport will make a statement, and I am sure it will be soon, indicating that there is evidence before the department which will enable it to publish more specific guidelines, or preferably regulations based on the principles I have indicated, for circulation in the first instance to those concerned in the indus-