

Canada Shipping Act

of water, and the Government comes to his rescue by throwing an anchor into the water and taking him straight to the bottom.

The fact is that the Seaway is in trouble. Traffic in the St. Lawrence Seaway is being siphoned off to other routes, one of which is most worrisome, that is the Mississippi route. There are no user charges on the Mississippi. We have had a bridge collapse so that we were closed down and traffic over the last 24 months was blocked, which gave the St. Lawrence Seaway an international black eye. We had the wall of a canal collapse and trap a ship, which closed down the Seaway for another period of time.

Now when traffic is moving out of the Seaway what does the Government do? Does it intend to fix the Seaway up? No, it took \$30 million held by the Seaway authorities in trust for expansion, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) put it back into general revenues. The Government says: "We have to watch those fares. We are going to shoot ourselves in the foot. In our desire to get an extra penny, we are going to lose a dollar", and raises the tolls on the Welland Canal by 15 per cent. Does the Government say: "We have to restore the international reputation of the Seaway and provide some dollars for upgrading and renovation"? No. The Government brings in Bill C-75, which includes Clause 4, and on top of 15 per cent charge for new tolls on the Welland Canal, and on top of taking away \$30 million with which the Seaway authorities had to work, it is now going to impose additional charges.

Some Hon. Members are saying: "Surely, that fellow from Newfoundland does not know what he is talking about. There is not really a serious problem on the Seaway". Well, if there is no problem with the Seaway, why has the Minister of Transport requested the Standing Committee on Transport, of which I am a member, to strike a subcommittee to go to work this summer to examine the problems of the St. Lawrence Seaway? Hon. Members of the House who are going to serve on that subcommittee on the one hand acknowledge there is disaster. It is like a fellow standing on the gallows with a noose around his neck about to go through the trap door. They acknowledge the situation. So the Government sets up an emergency task force to examine the problem and save the Seaway on the one hand, and on the other hand puts across the back of that system additional user charges. Never before in the history of Canada and in the history of the Canada Shipping Act has there been such a provision, such a power to lay charges. Heretofore, that had not even been contemplated, dreamed of or even existed.

Mr. Forrestall: Nonsense. Go back to 1983 and check the record. Try to be relevant, will you?

Mr. Tobin: Not nonsense, my friend. Never before has a Government come before its people and asked for authority to raise money without telling them in advance how much money is to be raised, who is to pay and what it is being paid for. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? It is like a fellow who walks into the grocery store and meets the cashier who tells him to pay \$200 now and pick up his groceries later. The Minister of

Transport is asking Parliament to give him the authority to raise money, but he is not going to tell us from whom it shall be raised, or how much will be raised.

Mr. Forrestall: Why don't you talk about the consultative committee and the undertaking by the Minister? Why not tell the whole story, not just selected parts of it?

Mr. Tobin: A consultative committee? The Hon. Member may not be aware but his constituents sent him here to represent their interests. I think in most regards he does a fairly good job of it, but if he believes his constituents sent him here to give the Minister of Transport this incredible and dangerous power—

Mr. Robichaud: Choking power.

Mr. Tobin: Yes, choking power, a vile, dastardly, and undemocratic power. He wants this power now and will tell us later how it is to be imposed. He ought to go back to the nearest wharf and have a chat with the fishermen, and into the nearest corporate office and have a chat with the shippers. That is not why his constituents sent him or any other Hon. Member here. Does anyone want to consult with a fellow who has a gun in his hand? The Minister now has the power to impose the fees. He says to the fishermen: "I am here to consult with you. I now have Bill C-75, and Clause 4, through the House. I now legally have the power to impose whatever fees I want. I now come to you and ask if you mind". What kind of consultation is that?

● (1240)

I consulted a fellow like that once when I was 12. He consulted me a whole bunch. It was in a school-yard. In my back pocket I had a little play gun and this big bully came and consulted me. He said: "I want that gun". I said: "No, you can't have it". He pummelled me. He pounded me. He kicked me and stoned me. He left me lying in the dust, and he took my gun. The teacher said: "What happened?" I said: "He beat me up and took my gun away". He said: "No, I did not. I consulted him". That is the type of consultation the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) is having with the users of the country. Once he has this power, this authority granted through Parliament, is he going to consult with them? Don't be so silly! That type of consultation is the type of consultation that is happening in South Africa today. It is simply not good enough, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) so properly indicated to the House. We do not need that type of consultation in the country. It is not consultation by any stretch of the imagination, no matter how you look at it.

The St. Lawrence Seaway is doomed as a commercial sea link if Ottawa continues its policy of neglect. That is what Paul Martin, Junior, said, and he is owner of Canada's largest lake freighter fleet. "Posing an even greater threat to Great Lakes shipping are some of the proposed changes to the Canada Shipping Act," Martin said. The alterations as