

Maritime Code

If we accepted the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East, we would immediately eliminate the great need for permits being granted at this time. Most of our shipping is done by permit. It is true that some shipping is done on small ships, but quite possibly this is only on a part-time basis. In the main, however, it is safe to say there is no Canadian merchant navy.

If we want a Canadian merchant navy we will have to pay for it. If we were unable to ship our wheat in foreign bottoms, we would have to supply Canadian bottoms to move the wheat. With the amount of wheat we have been moving to other countries we could well afford to support a large grain moving fleet. We would be able to control that fleet as to availability, and relate it to the operations of our ports and our rail transportation system. In fact we would have real control over it. We would be in a much better position to guarantee delivery on certain specific dates and not have to renege on our contracts, as in now often the case.

There is a desire on the part of Canadians to have their own ships with their own flags moving their merchandise around the world. Most people will agree that our international trade is important. We have to do something about it.

The second motion, in my opinion, is different with regard to developing a Canadian transportation facility by insisting on Canadian crews and Canadian working conditions. It involves Canadian entrepreneurs who will be competing with the permit system which is mainly operated for foreign or exemption ships. Is it unreasonable to tell that archaic department which issues these permits that a person should be able to appeal? There must be some justification for a permit being granted. One would think that permits are the exception. However, they are not. The licensing system covers most coastal shipping. Most of it is done under the permit system. Is it unreasonable to ask for an appeal against a bad decision by the department?

The Canadian entrepreneur must hire Canadian crews. He is unable to meet the competition because he has to carry other liabilities involved in our law. That should not be taken into consideration is assessing whether one ship is providing an economic service as another, although the end result per ton may be considerably different. The Canadian entrepreneur may be operating much more efficiently and providing a less costly transportation service, taking into consideration his requirements under the law as opposed to those given a licence and exempt from all these conditions.

● (1530)

There has been considerable argument in recent years about seamen under Canadian registry and the demands they have made over the years for better safety standards, higher salaries, and improved living conditions. They have been aggressive, in some cases more aggressive than they should have been, but they were not only fighting the ship owners in this country they were fighting the Department of Transport as well. They have always had to fight the Department of Transport.

I can remember attending a meeting with a former minister of finance who was then parliamentary secretary to the minister of transport of the day. Another hon. member

and I, together with that gentleman who is no longer with us, put up a fight, and that fight was not against the steamship owners or the pilots' association but against the Department of Transport. The department had made up its mind at that time the certain radio facilities would not be provided because no allowance had been made for them in the budget. The companies were willing to make the necessary changes in their structure, and so were the unions, but the Department of Transport was not.

With regard to licensing and the appeal procedure, as well as labour standards affecting workers in this trade, they are backward, they are not progressive. In my opinion this is the type of department which should be disbanded and started over again, because no matter who goes into it he seems to fall into the same mould. I have never met anybody in the department who has been progressive to any degree. The minister and the parliamentary secretary should take a close look at the people they are dealing with and the advice they are getting.

Fortunately there are those who are concerned about the development of the Canadian merchant navy, people who are concerned about the future of the Canadian shipbuilding industry, people who want a fleet under Canadian registry capable of moving our goods between one port of this nation and another, and eventually, if this is at all possible in an economic sense, capable of carrying our goods to countries abroad in the course of international trade.

I am sure the parliamentary secretary would agree that even in Saskatchewan where he comes from people were quite happy to enlist in great numbers in the navy during the last war, as well as in the Canadian merchant navy. They did so because they had an understanding of our necessity to deal by sea with other countries across the world and they were willing to make a contribution to that end.

The situation has not changed. The Canadian people are still waiting to make a contribution of that kind, and when the parliamentary secretary declines to accept motion No. 6 he is really saying to the department "Go ahead, operate on the basis of the exemptions, operate with foreign crew between Canadian ports, operate with cheap labour, operate in such a way as to accept conditions which do not conform with Canadian labour standards, operate in the same way as you would if this were a banana republic." If this is what he wants let him go along with the department and oppose this amendment. Those who really want a Canadian merchant navy will support motion No. 6.

Motion No. 6 means that sailors, even those operating under licence, will have to be paid Canadian wages and enjoy Canadian safety standards, besides having to meet other requirements which have been mentioned during the debate. If the Liberals are stupid enough to vote against this motion the Maritime Code will be set back for at least 100 years.

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): I, too, wish to speak on this amendment. May I say I agree that the motions to which Your Honour drew attention are not related substantially, but we can, for purposes of discussion, talk about them together and we appreciate the