

Maritime Code

There has been thorough and lengthy discussion of all aspects of Bill C-61 in this Chamber and outside, and it has been going on for a number of years. There was an opportunity to consider the provisions of the bill in principle in the lengthy debate at second reading stage; it was considered again for weeks at the committee hearings, and finally it came back to this House some weeks ago for further analysis and discussion at report stage. If we refer the bill or part of it to the standing committee for further analysis at this stage, we should be very specific in our requirements. I do not believe it would be wise to make a general or broad reference back to the committee.

The hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) in the wording of his amendment referred to clauses 8 to 14 inclusive, but I believe that phrasing is still too broad. The reference from this House should be more specific and direct the attention of the committee to those clauses of the bill which have been identified by interested groups and by the minister in the House today as requiring some modification. I refer to clause 8, clause 11, and clause 14.

There has been considerable discussion and certain representations about the bill in this House, and I think members have identified the areas about which they are concerned. I think it is clear that the areas that should be dealt with by further statutory amendment are those in clauses 8, 11, and 14, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the wise and proper course for this House to follow would be to ask the standing committee to consider generally the subject matter of the coasting trade which has been before the committee already and has been exhaustively examined.

● (2100)

I suggest that it would be more appropriate to ask for consideration of those portions of the statute which could be subject to further modification at this stage. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais):

That the amendment be amended by deleting the words 'clauses 8 to 14 inclusive' and substituting the following words therefor:

'clauses 8, 11 and 14'

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, amendments, and amendments to amendments are coming thick and fast tonight, as we debate this bill shortly before we are to return to our ridings. Bill C-61 is an attempt to implement government policy in certain maritime areas.

You know, as I listened to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Goodale), the minister having been involved in other activities for the last few days, I wondered if the minister and the parliamentary secretary who come from the heartland of this country, beautiful Saskatchewan—

Mr. Goodale: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nowlan:—where the wheat grows as thick as seaweed grows on the east coast, would have shown the same cavalier attitude to changes affecting the east and west coasts if the Crowsnest Pass agreement were under scrutiny with a view to amendment. Yet there were the minister and the parliamentary secretary using professorial platitudes to describe the effect of Bill C-61. The parliamentary

[Mr. Goodale.]

secretary, whose experience is limited basically to the heartland of Saskatchewan, proposed an amendment. If he had felt the sea between his toes he would begin to appreciate what this bill means to maritimers.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Would he not have felt the salt?

Mr. Nowlan: The only thing the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) knows about the sea is that the St. Boniface River ultimately empties into the sea.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I was in the navy before you were born, son!

Mr. Nowlan: Joe, you are getting old.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Not old, better.

Mr. Nowlan: As long as you keep the fire in your belly and not in your head, you'll be all right.

Bill C-61 is a measure fundamental to the east and west coasts of this land. We heard the minister speak today in a competent way. He is one of the competent fellows on the other side. At least he stands out in comparison to other cabinet ministers, something like a lightning rod to attract lightning. There are so few competent cabinet ministers opposite that when one is the least bit competent, he rather stands out like a lightning conductor for the lightning to strike. Unfortunately for the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) he will get hit by a lightning bolt if he allows Bill C-61 to pass without amendment.

The minister gave assurances that, before certain regulations are proclaimed, there will be a committee hearing at which the impact of these regulations can be assessed.

Mr. Goodale: It is in the bill.

Mr. Nowlan: As the parliamentary secretary says, that is in the bill. We know what that means.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): It is as if the minister had a simulator.

Mr. Nowlan: He does not meet the expense of running a simulator. We know that once the government makes up its mind and regulations are defined, it is somewhat late in the day to hold public hearings. Perhaps I can use an analogy the parliamentary secretary can understand, because he does not understand much about the sea but understands something about barnyards. You know, it is a bit late to close the barn door after the sheep, cattle, and livestock have bolted out to the range. It is a bit late then to close the barn door. Mr. Speaker, I say this because you, I, and other hon. members have been involved perhaps in more situations requiring common sense than has our young parliamentary secretary from the heartland of Saskatchewan. Be that as it may, it is difficult for Canadians to listen to the Minister of Transport and believe what he says when he gives assurances about matters affecting transportation. They remember that we had an election a couple of years ago when, almost every day of the week, some announcement concerning transportation was made.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): And it started in Cornwall.