

Canada Shipping Act

farmers at the farmyard f.o.b. is 1.5 cents per pound. Since the farmer is already losing 3.5 cents a pound, how much longer can the agricultural industry survive? If the cost of ice-breaking services, dredging services and those other services which usually come from general revenue are added, the cost will probably be up to 6.5 cents a pound.

How does the Hon. Member believe his Government will use Clause 4 once this legislation is passed?

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, first I would point out to the Hon. Member for Egmont (Mr. Henderson) that I stated at the beginning of my remarks that I believe most of the amendments were long overdue. I did not say that I agreed with everything in Bill C-75. I pointed out that it would be almost impossible for any legislation that is introduced to be perfect. There will be those in any nation who will find some faults in their legislation.

Let me point out to the Hon. Member that I know of cases where ice-breaker services have been called upon not to provide ice-breaking services but to have fuel or food put on board vessels. That is why I am not entirely opposed to Clause 4. I think the Government should recover the costs of those services that are provided to put fuel or food on a vessel. I do not believe that charges for ice-breaking services in the Maritimes, whether it is Newfoundland, P.E.I., Sydney harbour or Cape Breton or the St. Lawrence River will be made if it is to enable ships to carry on the commerce of this country and ship exports to other countries or bring produce from one province to another.

I am quite familiar with the Hon. Member's Province of Prince Edward Island. I have shipped a good many loads of spuds from that province. Sometimes I have had to put heaters in the hold to raise the temperature before loading the potatoes because they would freeze before we got the hatches back on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate.

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in this debate on Bill C-75 with decidedly mixed feelings. The debate has already focused on some of the strengths of this Bill as well as some of its weaknesses. It is worth taking a few moments to consider the contributions this Bill will make to the statute law of this country as it deals with an important part of our transportation system, specifically the support and regulation of shipping in the waters of this country.

The Government has often given us the impression that regulation is detrimental. The former Liberal Minister of Transport actually created the impression as well that deregulation would be the direction of the future.

● (1540)

It is good to see legislation which recognizes those matters of life and death, safety, prevention of pollution and so on, for which the Bill provides. It is also good to see that the Government recognizes there are situations in which regulation is

quite essential and provides us with a Bill which makes provision for these areas. Since we are honoured this afternoon to have the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) listening to the debate, surely it would not be inappropriate for me, as a member of one of the opposition caucuses, to commend him for that. I trust that all movements in the deregulation policy of the Government will be carried out with regard for the safety of travellers and for the safety of the environment. Surely the changes will not be carried through in any blind pursuit of some principle without regard for the environment and for people who work in the industry as well as those who travel on aircraft, trains, buses or whatever, for whom the Minister of Transport has responsibility.

Recognizing that the process of deregulation has been judicially handled in this particular area by the Minister, I also recognize that the Bill contains a variety of provisions which is long overdue. I suspect that it would not be unfair, although it may have been a more extreme case, to compare this Bill with the Aeronautics Act which we considered some time ago. There were significant revisions and amendments to update legislation largely dated back to the inter-war years, which makes it more than a half-century ago. Surely the preceding Liberal Government was not very concerned about the infrastructure or transportation system of the country or about legislative provisions for it. If at times I am inclined to say nasty things about this particular Government in terms of the slowness with which it arrives at initiatives for us to consider, some of these matters deserve to be recognized as more than just housekeeping legislation because they in fact update legislation which provides for our basic transportation system.

The most unfavourable part of the Bill before us is the particular provision which has already received a great deal of attention, the provision which would enable the Minister or the Government to institute a cost recovery system against our shippers for Coast Guard services. The Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan (Mr. Angus) already recognized the very real danger that those particular charges could only be part of an increased loading of cost on the transportation system, particularly in the St. Lawrence Seaway, with which shippers may be faced in 1986 and years thereafter. We recognize that particular possibility and consider the importance of the transportation system to Canada. It is important to northwestern Ontario and to the great City of Thunder Bay to which I want to devote a little of my attention this afternoon. We have real reason for concern about part of the Bill and powerful reason for asking the Minister to reconsider Clause 4 and give up the idea of any kind of cost recovery.

After all, it is in a time of recession, at the very least, that this proposal comes before us. There are enough Canadians facing situations which seem to be ones of depression. I recognize that it is tempting for a Minister to contemplate some possibility of recovering costs in terms of his contribution to the deficit reduction program of the Government. However, there is such a thing as short-sighted reduction which makes Canadian industries even less competitive than they might be in other circumstances, which reduces economic activity in the