

Customs Tariff

strategy, those people could go back to work. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that when Canadian taxpayers are assisting that Company to build some of the largest and some of the most effective shipbuilding facilities on this continent, coupled with probably some of the best design and engineering opportunities, and this Company could put 1,200 Canadians back to work, the federal Government will not put that marine industrial policy in pace. It is a policy which they have already developed, yet they will not put the proper amendments into this legislation, and so 1,200 people are not working in that community, a fact which is having a terrible impact on it.

It is interesting also that Saint John has nothing more on its order book. There is not one more thing on the order book for that company unless they start getting some co-operation from the federal Government. Judging by the Official Opposition's comments, the Government will have a long wait before it gets co-operation from them. It is time they stood up and indicated where they stand on this Bill.

● (1740)

Mr. Lewis: How many Members have you down there, Ray?

Mr. Skelly: Certainly some of the Members from the Great Lakes region who are now chanting along should take a look at the communities of Hamilton and St. Catharines, and the fact that Great Lakes shippers are going to Scotland to buy their vessels. Those Members seem to be of the view that it is great that people in their communities are unemployed. If they want a debate on this issue, I invite them to stand up and comment on how they want to jam this Bill through without taking the proper amount of time to examine it. It is my intention, Mr. Speaker, to be down in the St. Catharines region, going through these Members' ridings and telling people about the need for a proper shipbuilding policy. Perhaps the Hon. Member for Burlington (Mr. Kempling) should stand up in this House to show that the Opposition is concerned about those jobs. That is the kind of co-operation I would like. Perhaps we should get it also from the Deputy House Leader for the Conservative Party, who, I agree, makes more sense than the House Leader. I see the Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher) nodding.

Mr. Lewis: He is falling asleep. You have put him to sleep.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to speak on this Bill because it was of such great importance to the people of Canada. The marine industrial strategy is vitally important. The fact is that Canadian resources are creating jobs in other countries. Other countries have moved vigorously to protect their shipbuilding and operating capability. Well, we cannot do that by just changing the Customs Act, but it is a start. Another anomaly is that the federal Government would go to such lengths to draft such a policy when it knows how important it is in the Provinces of Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia and the Atlantic Provinces. The Government has drafted it, it is my understanding that it has been approved, yet the Government will not release it or implement it. The Government has consulted with industry, it has industry's

approval and support, along with that of organized labour and the communities which are dependent on this industry. I ask the Minister: where is that policy? where are the changes to this legislation?

Because the Government has failed to act, Mr. Speaker, and because the Official Opposition has concentrated on game playing rather than substance, we are faced with the situation where the people of this country are going to have to do the job themselves. Municipal leaders, operators of industry and organized labour have joined together to form a national lobbying group. It has happened on the Pacific Coast. There is total support from the Mayors of Victoria and Vancouver, from the marine industrial group and from the shipbuilders and operators. They are going to form a lobbying group and together with the Province of British Columbia they will come to Ottawa to ask the Government to co-operate by putting in place both an effective shipbuilding policy and effective customs legislation. The City Council of Halifax, the Mayor of Saint John's, New Brunswick, along with organized labour and industry people, will be in Ottawa with these other groups to pressure the Government into releasing this policy and putting thousands of people back to work. Of course, they will be joined by groups from the Great Lakes area and the Quebec region, specifically Montreal and Quebec where this is vitally important. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has made the commitment, and it is time the Government deliver on that commitment to put Canadians back to work.

There are just a few more remarks on this topic which I would like to put on the record before I rest my voice, as has been recommended. Essentially what we have is a very passive policy which the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Cosgrove) refuses to employ. But we should be going a step further, Mr. Speaker, and developing a full-blown marine industrial strategy in an attempt to produce the vessels and marine platforms we will need over the next two or three decades. We must look ahead rather than back. If we do not act now, if we not make a decision to develop and implement a full-blown shipbuilding policy, we simply will not be able to do it later on down the road. Without a decision now there simply will not be the opportunity later on. Other countries will have developed the technology, and it will be too expensive to put it in place here because we will not be able to amortise it over a large enough number of vessels. We are not just talking about the development of offshore hydrocarbons, we are talking about shipping our basic resources of grain, coal, base metals in Canadian bottoms so that Canadian seamen have the opportunity to work. The community of Port Hardy, on the northern end of Vancouver Island, has been the subject of a study to determine whether or not it would be in an appropriate location for processing of sea-bed resources. The question is what role will Canada play in the development of sea-bed resources. Certainly there are many opportunities to produce marine platforms and vessels, but the Government sits and does nothing. It has already developed the policy, it is ready to go, and with some very simple amendments to the customs legislation thousands