

who can least afford to bear this burden, it will have a very severe impact upon Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canada will have one of the most difficult winters it has ever experienced this year. This section will not do much for the morale of that region.

Clause 4 of the Bill refers to Section 3.1. In particular, the new Section 3.1(2) reads as follows:

Charges may be imposed pursuant to subsection (1) in relation to any ship or vessel, regardless of whether the Canadian Coast Guard actually provides a navigational service to that particular ship or vessel.

That is a very arbitrary provision. What exactly will it mean? Can charges be laid arbitrarily, regardless of any service provided? Who will be adjudicating this? Who will say who will pay? If I seem skeptical, I think I have a reason for it. Hon. Members of the House have a reason to be skeptical. We have seen what VIA Rail has had to endure at the hands of Canadian National. It was charged for things which Canadian National wrote off and had no right to charge. It made charges and retroactive charges for whatever it wanted to charge. One would think, in this day and age, that these things could not occur. This subsection is very volatile and dangerous. We do not really know what in fact it will mean or what the ramifications will be.

Also the new Section 3.1(3) indicates that interest can be charged on outstanding accounts. The parties to be charged, unless this can be clarified to my satisfaction, will be the ones who may not be able to afford it. They are being told that if they do not pay on time, if their catches are not sufficient that they can pay it or if their shipping company is in jeopardy and they cannot bear the charges, they will not only be taken to court but will have interest placed on top of it. Not only will companies be put in jeopardy; they will also be told that they will be charged interest and taken to court.

Will there be any phasing of these charges? Will there be no charges one day, followed by charges the next day? I think these questions are very important ones. Fishermen and shippers should know the answers to these questions. Is there an appeal procedure? Is there an arbitration procedure? Is there someone in the Department who can hear grievances in this regard and perhaps give rulings without having to go to court? Will things be made easier for people who have to withstand these charges?

Mr. Mazankowski: Fairness above all else.

Mr. MacLellan: I appreciate the Minister's comment in that regard. If it were left up to him, that probably would be the case.

Mr. Siddon: He is the Minister.

Mr. MacLellan: A Minister does not always know what is going on in his Department.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacLellan: Let me say that he will be the first one. If he has to spend time calculating whose charges are justified

Canada Shipping Act

and whose charges are not, he will be a very, very busy man, doing that along with everything else for which he is responsible.

I should like to refer to a ferry service which is very important to my area, that of CN Marine. It is a major employer, and there have been severe reductions in employment over recent years. When the new vessel comes into service—

Mr. Mazankowski: There were 1,200 before I came on the scene.

Mr. MacLellan:—there will be further reductions. What will the imposition of costs for aids to navigation, dredging and vessel traffic services do to CN Marine? Granted, this is a Crown corporation. Is the Government going to impose costs for these services on CN Marine? CN Marine is already paid a large subsidy to maintain the service it provides. On top of this, will the Government now charge CN Marine the costs for what it is providing under Clause 4 of this Bill? If so, that will help to literally bury the CN ferry service. On the one hand, imposing the cost of the services provided on top of the subsidy that already exists and on the other hand through user-pay theories that are running rampant throughout the Government at the present time to increase charges for the use of the service will drive everyone to direct water transportation from Halifax and Montreal.

● (1750)

Let us look at the situation as it exists right now. Direct water transportation from Montreal to St. John's is provided by a private company but it is subsidized. The private company receives the subsidy and the subsidy it receives helps it to provide the service between Montreal and St. John's which takes business away from CN Marine, the Government's own Crown corporation. This means that CN Marine will make less money and it will have to receive a higher subsidy.

We have not seen anything come from the Government on shipping as it applies to Atlantic Canada that is reasonable. Why should we believe anything reasonable will come out of this Bill? We have not received any indication that anything reasonable will come out of it. From history and from this Act, we have not seen that there will be a reasonable interpretation placed upon the shipping problems of Atlantic Canada.

Until we get some indication of reasonableness, how can we support this particular clause? It has been said by others that there are a great many good provisions in this Bill. That is true. However, there are a great many questions and concerns about this Bill.

I have a concern regarding ice-breaking. In Sydney Harbour, there is a problem with ice-breaking in the spring of the year. If a ferry going from North Sydney to Newfoundland gets stuck, as has happened in the past, the ice-breakers have to free that vessel. Are charges then going to be imposed upon the CN Marine service? If the ice-breakers are stationed in Sydney Harbour for weeks in anticipation of vessels being stuck in the ice, is that cause to charge CN Marine? There can