

If we cannot export we can hardly survive. There is the old and often made statement, if we cannot receive fair and equitable shipping rates we can hardly compete.

In my opinion this bill legalizes something, which may or may not be termed highway robbery, for three years. This is like burying our heads in the sand and not facing problems squarely. It is high time that Canada said Canadian exporters and importers in international trade markets deserve a fair break. We will not allow Canadians to be subject to exorbitant rates which have in the past tended to limit and control our ability to export. Surely, this again will be a problem if we do not watch very carefully what we are doing.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I see no problem in supporting the amendment introduced by the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner). At the same time, I would suggest that there was no real reason the hon. member could not support the original amendment put forward. In fact, all it would do would be to change the authority responsible for the regulations about which we are talking. The amendment now introduced by the hon. member would reduce the time from three years to six months.

It seems highly irregular that we should introduce legislation in this House that attempts to legalize those violations that have been well pointed out by the Combines Investigation branch. I suggest a good analogy could be made in respect of those people who have abortions. The government is not prepared to bring in legislation to deal with that particular problem in this society. Yet, at the same time, the government is willing in respect of these steel monsters of the ocean to bring in legislation which will legalize these violations of the law.

The main function of this House of Commons, and the members here, should be to protect the users of these services. We have heard many submissions recited throughout this country which set out very clearly that users of services and products hauled by these services should be protected. I suggest if we look at the situation in light of this amendment, at least it would be reviewed in a period of six months by this House.

If we look at the transcript of the proceedings of the standing committee which dealt with this at some length we will find this:

The Canadian Shippers' Council has publicly declared its support of the Bill and appears to feel that it provides a desirable statutory base upon which to establish effective consultative machinery.

Shipping Conferences Exemption Act

Then the report continues:

If I were to venture an opinion, Sir, it would be that this general acceptance is due to the fact that both sides have had ample time to anticipate the measure and they see in it a framework in which they can promote trade to mutual satisfaction and with minimum disruption.

Whenever I see certain conferences, such as we are dealing with today, refer to having minimum disruptions I wonder whether or not there really is legislation which concerns itself with this particular aspect. I am sure once again if we look at the situation, and consider these flag of convenience ships plying the waters of this country and this world, we would appreciate the fact that there has to be regulation. We must control these flag of convenience ships so we do not have a repetition of those things we have witnessed in the past number of years.

It is not good enough to suggest that conferences will regulate these things. It is absolutely imperative that we bring in legislation which is strong enough to regulate the conferences. I am not necessarily in agreement with the suggestion that too many regulations are particularly bad for any particular industry, because there have to be more rules within which these industries themselves must work. I feel the conference we are referring to here is one in respect of which we must have ground rules, and that there has to be legislation to police these rules to the extent that they mean something to those people who are dependent upon this phase of transportation.

The hon. member for Crowfoot put it very ably. There is a concern on the part of members of this House in so far as our Canadian identity is concerned. There is a particular concern about our national pride in those regulations that we have put into effect to govern the shipping industries to which we have referred.

There are many ship owners who do not belong to the conference, and they are not provided the same type of protection. Without that protection, they can violate the regulations without worrying about repercussions. For these reasons, I should like to suggest that we can support this amendment. It will at least give this bill some teeth in that we will review the situation in a shorter period of time than now suggested. The six month period is realistic, even though it may take time for the necessary machinery to be established.

I am certain that if the original amendment and the amendment now before us both passed, the situation previously referred to