

Canada Shipping Act

owned and managed by Canadian and American authorities. If we cannot even get our act together to run the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, how in the name of heaven can we possibly be expected to conduct free trade negotiations?

The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay, Ontario, says that the St. Lawrence Seaway is already the only North American system which charges user fees. They say that it seems strange that the Government would propose changes which could put Canada in a less competitive position rather than offer the opportunity for Canada to trade more vigorously. They concluded their submission by saying that Clause 4 is totally counterproductive.

Clause 4 represents the first occasion in 26 years of operations that the Governments of Canada and the United States have not agreed on a joint action. It has been 26 years since the \$450 million St. Lawrence Seaway was completed and we initiated the joint operation of that Seaway. In all of those 26 years the Governments of Canada and the United States have consulted and reached consensus on how the Seaway is to be operated. In all those years there has always been agreement on what services are to be provided and what charges are to be applied. This is the first time in 26 years that the Government has sought to apply new charges and impose fees which were not arrived at by consensus between the Canadian and U.S. authorities which jointly manage the St. Lawrence Seaway.

I find that regrettable. Quite honestly, I find it hard to understand in the face of the fact that the Prime Minister and the Government believe they can negotiate a comprehensive trade treaty when they have now clearly illustrated that they cannot even jointly manage the Seaway Authority which, for the past 26 years, has operated on a consensus basis.

● (1330)

The National Farmers Union says that Clause 4 will see charges passed on to farmers already strapped with a mountain of added costs. That has to be an understatement. The selling price of wheat is the lowest it has been in 60 years. Grain farmers in western Canada find themselves, as does the Government, caught in the squeeze of a trade war between the U.S. and western Europe. They are caught between the squeeze of the subsidies proposed by the U.S. Farm Bill and the tremendous subsidies being paid by the EEC to its member states and their farmers. Farmers in this country are in such a difficult position that an all-Party parliamentary committee of this House recently recommended that the price of wheat products be raised, that Canadians contribute something to our farmers by paying more for bread and pasta. On the one hand the Government asks Canadians to pay more to assist our farmers, and on the other hand it imposes through Clause 4 of Bill C-75, additional charges on farmers. One hand of this Government does not know what the other hand is doing. What would be more tragic than that one hand does know what the other hand is doing?

We see more evidence of the fact that we have a Government much more interested in managing perception, public

reaction, and manipulating public opinion, than in managing the problems confronting our people. We spend far too much time in this Chamber discussing the sexy items which make the front page of *The Globe and Mail*, the controversial, slam-bang, exciting items which cause an uproar in this House, and far too little time debating matters affecting our citizens in their towns, regions and provinces. The people of this country, be they a prairie farmer, a sailor on the Great Lakes, a potato farmer in Prince Edward Island, or a fisherman in Port au Choix, Newfoundland, have unanimously said to the Government that Clause 4 of Bill C-75 is going to break their backs. It will be the clause that kills the goose that lays the golden egg.

This clause is an attack on the primary producer of this country. It is an attack on the people who work the land or the sea. It is an attack on the farmers who preserve, protect and enhance the bread-basket of this country. It is an attack on the men who go into our forest lands to cut the trees. It is an attack on those who go into the mines and bring ore to the surface. It is an attack on the primary producer who lives in the regions of this country. It will impose a tax on them for being the primary producer.

It is time that we in this place remembered that the money used to build the great cities of Canada and the palatial surroundings in which we find ourselves here, is not generated on Bay Street. It is not generated in the Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal stock exchanges. The money used to build our highways and create our cities is generated by the primary producer, the fisherman, forester, farmer and miner. What is speculated on in the stock exchanges is our forestry resources, our food and fish. The primary producer is the engine that moves this country. The health and welfare of the primary producer will ultimately decide the health and welfare of all of us who live in urban areas. I live in suburbia. It has nice streets, paved roads, lovely sidewalks and a beautiful little park in the back. I know that the engine which drives this country is not in the House of Commons. The House of Commons, by imposing this tax on the primary producer, becomes like the tail that wants to wag the dog. The House and the Government should remember that the tail that attempts to wag the dog will find some pretty strong and vicious teeth buried in it. The Government is destroying an important part of the mosaic that is this country.

I have spoken only briefly on Clause 4 and I want to come back to that. There is a second reason why this Bill has failed. It has to do with the failure of the Government to recognize the major recommendation of a royal commission, jointly sponsored, funded and administered by the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland. On February 18, 1982, an oil rig 200 miles offshore called the *Ocean Ranger* went to the bottom in an Atlantic storm. Of the 84 lives lost, more than 60 were Canadian, and almost all of those were Newfoundlanders. The two Governments realized that they had to find a better way of ensuring the safety of our workers at sea. Again, these are the primary producers. The people on