

*Canada Shipping Act*

We have another problem. Vessels that come to Summerside to take on a cargo of potatoes for Argentina, Portugal, Algeria or wherever have to be refrigerated vessels. While they may have 17 to 22 feet at high tide, at low tide there is a shortfall of seven to eight feet. All the piping for the refrigerated units is in the keel and along the hull of the ship. When the loaded vessels are tied up they cannot sit on the bottom or damage to the equipment will occur.

Every five to six years around the Queen's Wharf in Summerside, dredging has to take place. Sometimes it is okay to use cranes on the wharf itself but at other times you need have to have a suction of a clam dredge, a very expensive proposition. As a result, the users, and in this case the users would be the vessel owners, would have to charge a lot more for the use of their vessel to the shipper in order for them to maintain their costs and show a small profit.

● (1520)

I should like to refer to another issue of concern. In the winter-time, communities alongside the Gulf of St. Lawrence and along the Northumberland Straits, whether it be Summerside, Charlottetown, Georgetown or Surrey, are ice-bound. Normally by the middle of January we find that ice-breakers from the Department of Transport are required to clear a path for vessels either to enter or to exit from those harbours. Over the past six years I have had problems trying to obtain the services of an ice-breaker when a vessel has been loaded and is ready to leave port for its destination. I have always maintained that the Government does not have adequate ice-breaking facilities in Canada, certainly in Atlantic Canada and in northern Canada. Not only will we find ourselves with a scarcity of good ice-breaking services, we will have to pay the cost of those services if the Bill is passed.

What would happen if the Bill were passed into law today and the Government decided to charge a fee? We do not know how much that fee would be, if in fact it were to charge one. If it will not do so, why would it include that clause in the Bill? Whether it is done now, six months down the road or 10 years down the road, this particular provision would allow the Government to do that. This Government, this Minister or indeed any Government or Minister who may follow could at some point in time impose a fee under this legislation.

In any event, on Monday of this week, I was told that the price of potatoes in Prince Edward Island, f.o.b. at the farm-gate, was 1.5 cents per pound and that the cost of production was at least 5 cents per pound. At this point in time producers are losing roughly 3.5 cents per pound on every pound of potatoes produced. What will be the effect of the costs resulting from this legislation as well as the inspection fees which the Government has placed upon potato producers as one of its main efforts to obtain more revenue? If this legislation is passed, in my province, at the very least, 50 per cent of the farmers would be driven into bankruptcy. That may be the case this year without this piece of legislation being on the books. Therefore, I have great difficulty with the Bill, certainly with this particular clause.

Other areas of the fishing industry will certainly be affected by moorage fees, wharfage fees and so on. I wonder how the users will be charged, in that many fishermen do not necessarily tie up alongside the wharf. They tie vessel to vessel to vessel because harbours are not large enough to permit every vessel to have its own moorage at its own dockside. Certainly that is true in my own province. I suspect that that is the case in many areas in the Provinces of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick as well. If the Government goes ahead with the user-pay philosophy, how will it identify just exactly who is the user? I believe it was the Minister who suggested before the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry, in reply to a question posed by the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker), that as long as a vessel came into the harbour it would be subject to moorage fees, even if there was nothing to tie up to. I stand to be corrected, but I think it was the version of the former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. That presents another fear for the people whom I represent.

I am sure the situation would be the same for a number of other ports in Atlantic Canada, in British Columbia and in the North. Many similar situations will arise. In Newfoundland I suspect that probably 95 per cent of its ports would be or could be affected by this piece of legislation.

I have heard Hon. Members opposite say that they will not be imposing user fees. Perhaps the Minister will reply to that. However, my response to them would be: "If you are not going to do it, why include it in the legislation?" It may not be the Minister's intention to have user-fees, to charge for ice-breaking services, to charge for aids to navigation, to charge for vessel traffic services or to charge for escorting services. If it is not his intention, why is the Minister trying to bootleg the legislation through the House? If he decides on the issue, we could have an open debate on it in Parliament.

I propose to move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate, the following amendment:

"That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and by substituting the following:

"Bill C-75 not be read a second time but that it be read a second time this day six months hence".

I move that amendment because I want to find out from the Government what user fees or other fees for ice-breaking services could be charged under this legislation. As a Member of Parliament, I represent my province to the best of my ability. We are proud of our agricultural industry in Prince Edward Island, specifically the potato industry. Therefore, I require more answers than what I have received from the Government, from the Minister and from Hon. Members opposite up to this point in time.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the amendment. The debate will now be on the amendment.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Chair will recognize the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) on questions and comments.