

Canada Shipping Act

Given that the concern expressed by these U.S. Senators was made on April 14 in a letter to the Prime Minister, is it any wonder that the U.S. Senate almost defeated a motion to proceed with free trade talks with Canada in a vote of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee? These 10 influential Senators, who represent 10 per cent of the total U.S. Senate, discovered that we cannot even get our act together in jointly managing the St. Lawrence Seaway. Is it any wonder that the Senate is sceptical about Canada understanding what is involved in trying to negotiate a comprehensive trade pact?

Mr. Forrestall: What does this have to do with Bill C-75?

Mr. Tobin: It has everything to do with Bill C-75 because Bill C-75 will apply to the St. Lawrence Seaway which is jointly managed by Canada and the United States. The American authority has written to the Prime Minister of Canada to ask what the Government is doing because it is going left while the Americans are going right. They say that such an approach will not work if we are to work together. It has everything to do with Bill C-75. If the Americans come to the conclusion that we are unable to run the St. Lawrence Seaway, surely no one would be surprised at their scepticism that the Government can get its act together to negotiate a free trade arrangement.

I have another letter which the Great Lakes Waterways Development Association wrote to the Prime Minister. They point out that it has been recognized that the traffic conditions on the lake Seaway system are not likely to be capable of supporting any further Government charges for at least the next two years. They suggest that the intervening time be used to redraft Clause 4. They say: "In the meantime, we recommend it be removed from Bill C-75 prior to enactment."

Incredible as it may seem, all of these people have been ignored by the Government of Canada. The Minister of Transport, sitting in one of those mirrored office buildings here in Ottawa, has somehow developed the notion that he is more sensitive and more aware of what is happening in the Great Lakes area of the St. Lawrence Seaway, and better understands how to meet the bottom line than all those organizations who make their bread and butter from and recognize the value of that major artery which moves the life blood of this country. He believes that he knows better than all of them and will proceed with this legislation.

Somehow the Minister has prevailed over the international representations of the U.S. Great Lakes Commission, the representations of Canada's major shipping industries, the representations of the little people in this country who are trying to scrape a living out of the sea and this clause is still in the Bill. Somehow he has prevailed over the commitment given by the Prime Minister to the Premier of Quebec last week.

I consider the Minister to be an intelligent person. I do not believe that he is insensitive or that one must hit him over the head with a hammer to get his attention. Therefore, the obvious reason why this measure is being pursued is that it is an extension to this particular Department of the user-pay

philosophy that the Government is imposing on every agency of the Government of Canada.

This is part of the Government's plan to operate its services and agencies much like McDonald's operates its hamburger stores. MacDonald's is a market driven company. It is going to sell hamburgers if the volume is right. It will build a store where the population is high enough. One will not find a MacDonald's hamburger joint in Trout River, in the great northern peninsula of my riding, or in St. Anthony, or in Port-au-Basques.

• (1230)

If the Government continues with its philosophy, one will not find a federal Government presence in any of those places either. The Government has now decided we are going to run the Government of Canada and its services in the same way in which MacDonald sells hamburgers. Where population warrants, where volume is high, where we can make a go of it, we will have a service. And all those Canadians who live where populations are not high and we cannot make a profit, we will not have a service. I want to tell the Government that it is not its mandate to function like MacDonald's hamburgers. The people of this country are not, in the strict sense of the word, shareholders in this business. Budgets are not designed to provide attractive numbers for accountants to look at. Budgets are about people. The Department of Transport does not serve as an entity unto itself, to meet its own internal objectives. The Department of Transport is an arm of Government. It is an extension of the people, providing the people with the services they need, depending on where they live. The philosophy, somehow, in a short 18 months, has been turned on its head so that the Department of Transport and, indeed, many departments of the Government, have taken on more the philosophy of MacDonald's than the philosophy of an agency responsible to its shareholders, and some of the shareholders live in places other than Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. They live along the coastlines of this great country.

I have been talking about the St. Lawrence Seaway—

Mr. Forrestall: You are not talking about anything. You are filibustering.

Mr. Tobin: —trying to suggest to the Government that to bring these additional charges to bear on the Seaway and the companies operating on the Seaway at this time is irresponsible. The banner headline in the *Windsor Star* last fall reads: "The St. Lawrence Seaway Crumbling". A banner of another newspaper last April reads: "Low Volume Has Seaway Struggling to Keep Afloat". Another headline reads: "Seaway Dying from Neglect, Shipper Says". Here is another headline: "The Foundering Seaway", and again another: "The St. Lawrence Seaway Has to Fix More than a Broken Lock". And yet another: "Canal Lock-out. A Collapsed Wall Halts Shipping in Foundering Seaway". If the St. Lawrence Seaway was a human being, it would be akin to a fellow floating in the water, having gone down twice and having taken in a lung-full