

Canada Shipping Act

belief is that in the allocation of the cost of a transportation network there should be a degree of mode neutrality; i.e. whether one looks at the infrastructure which supports an air transportation network or the road transportation network or, in this case, the Seaway transportation network, or indeed a rail transportation network, there should be a degree of commonality in the level to which these are subsidized, bearing in mind of course the degree to which they are used. My belief, based on previous experience and, indeed, on previous meetings with the Minister, although many years ago, is that it is probably the railroad which recovers the largest percentage of its costs at present.

I simply say to the Minister that the question of a targeted percentage is really something that I should be asking him to put before this House so that we can make a judgment. By way of a comment, I would certainly welcome hearing from him if there are such figures.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Member's answer. I think he answered it honestly. Yesterday, one of his colleagues suggested that these transportation services should be free. There should not be a user fee. So we have a contradiction within the NDP.

The Hon. Member alluded to the fact that the rail sector probably recovers the greatest percentage of its costs. Currently, in the marine mode, the recovery is somewhere from 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent. Would he consider that to be fair?

Mr. Parry: Mr. Speaker, first the Minister will permit me to doubt whether a Member on this side made a specific statement that the provision of service should be absolutely free. Second, I am sure that he would accept as my answer that I would be very interested indeed to see any figures which suggest that the cost recovery of any service was as low as 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is.

Mr. Parry: One thing that I am aware of from my own experience, and I appreciate that this may not fall under the Minister's responsibility, is that of small craft harbours, of which there are a number in my riding, and I would be very surprised if that facet of the marine mode was recovering such a low percentage—

Mr. Mazankowski: It is.

Mr. Parry: —of the cost of operation because my own observations have indeed been quite the contrary.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member checks he will find that the range of figures I quoted is correct. Furthermore, if he doubts my word about the interpretation of what one of my colleagues said, he might want to read *Hansard* at page 7691 where the Hon. Member for Prince Albert (Mr. Hovdebo) said:

I recognize that a certain amount of cost recovery has been going on for a long time, but is it necessary to increase it? Maybe we should be taking it off the others if they are increasing. Maybe transportation should be a free service.

Mr. Parry: Mr. Speaker, without getting into a question of nickels and dimes—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: You are involved in more than nickels and dimes.

Mr. Parry: —the use of the term “maybe” surely indicates the presentation of an argument on an entirely hypothetical basis. Maybe the Minister should examine whether transportation services should be—

Mr. McKnight: Now it is Party policy.

Mr. Parry: —provided free. Maybe the Minister should ignore representations from people like myself who suggest it is a good idea to recover some portion of the cost. Indeed, if the recovery is only in the order of 2.5 per cent, maybe it would be a worthwhile question to ask whether that recovery was worth the cost of collecting it. I point out that any statement that contains the word “maybe” cannot be treated as a categorical enunciation of policy.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to speak to the amendment moved by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Egmont (Mr. Henderson). The Hon. Member moved an amendment to Bill C-75, requesting that consideration of this Bill be postponed six months to give the Minister more time to reconsider certain aspects of Bill C-75 which had aroused considerable concern among many people in the Maritime Provinces, who are faced with major problems in the fisheries and potato-growing industries.

The House is aware that some of my colleagues from the Maritimes have spoken to point out that some aspects of Bill C-75 seem to infringe seriously on the agreement concluded by the Government of Canada and the Province of Newfoundland. This particular aspect was raised by the Hon. Member for Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin).

I have not heard the Minister clarify this particular issue. According to my hon. friend from Newfoundland, when the people of Newfoundland voted in favour of entering Confederation, commitments were made by the federal authorities on behalf of Canada to provide a certain number of services free of charge to the people of Newfoundland. However, Bill C-75 provides certain transportation fees for the people of Newfoundland.

I do not know whether the Minister has had time to examine the speech or comments made by my hon. friend in the House earlier this week, but I believe that the matter of the agreements—

Mr. Speaker, the Minister tells me that he listened very carefully to the comments of my colleague from Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe. I think that the point made about the