

Here we are adding to the cost of getting our goods to a market, and we have that market now buying from the United States causing further demand on our balance of international payments. The B.C. Council of Forest Industries goes on to say that water transportation is a vital factor if British Columbia lumber and plywood manufacturers are to maintain eastern Canada markets. The cost of that water transportation must reflect the competition of foreign flag vessels. To do otherwise is simply to place these markets in the hands of American producers. This is the kind of spin-off about which we in British Columbia are very frightened. We plead with the government and those on the staff of the department to understand this need.

The B.C. Council of Forest Industries is not convinced that regulations under the act will provide adequate provision for the use of foreign vessels in intercoastal trade. The proposed regulations are still classified confidential and therefore are not available for perusal and comment. That was true at the time of this brief, and the government has been good enough since to give us the draft of those regulations, which has helped us indeed.

It is interesting to note that at a meeting on the west Coast of all the organizations interested, the B.C. Chamber of Shipping, the B.C. Council of Forest Industries, the chambers of commerce, the Vancouver Board of Trade, and the Chamber of Mines, to an organization and to a man were against rule and interference by regulation, because of the past record of the government.

There is no reason at all why an area of Canada trying to provide jobs and get its product to world markets cannot work and have an improved decision making base. There is no reason at all why the key factors of concern in clauses 8 to 14 inclusive cannot be organized and be part of the statute so that our decision making base will be improved and so that we will not have to keep traipsing back to Ottawa—the act states “in writing”—to the minister. Mr. Speaker, have you any idea how long it takes for mail to come from British Columbia to Ottawa these days? It is unbelievable. The mail clears out of here and goes to British Columbia in about one third of the time it takes to move in the opposite direction.

● (2050)

The minister mentioned that the regulations would be made public, kept public, and that all changes would be public. This is one of the major concerns of the Council of Forest Industries, that changes in the regulations that are subsequent to the approval of the bill are not subject to the public procedures and public scrutiny that would prevail when a change in the act is proposed. They say that the only acceptable assurance is a specific amendment to the bill to exclude intercoastal trade, in clause 8.

On the west coast we are very edgy about rule by regulation and we are very edgy about the attempts of the bureaucracy down here to get this through. They seem to be more interested than does the minister. I would urge that our concerns be given full consideration. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro):

That Bill C-61 be not now read a third time but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications for the

Maritime Code

reconsideration of clauses 8 to 14 inclusive including any government amendments to be proposed thereto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport (Mr. Goodale).

Mr. Ralph E. Goodale (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have listened very carefully today to the debate in this Chamber on Bill C-61 and have been interested to hear the views expressed and the arguments in some quarters for changes in the legislation. This legislation has been before the House for a long time. Members of this Chamber who have sat in previous parliaments know that this subject has come before the House for consideration in the past, and that legislation has been presented to parliament which has not emerged in the final legislative process to become law.

The basic concepts we have been discussing today have been of interest to various groups in the country for many months and years. It is a subject which is not new to members nor to those who have an interest in it and have been looking at this particular concept and the proposals before the House for some long time.

The points of concern in regard to Bill C-61 were clearly and specifically identified earlier today in the comprehensive speech delivered by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang). With respect to those aspects of the objections and the concerns which lie outside the scope of the statute, the minister on many occasions in this House has given far-reaching undertakings not only to consult with all interested parties with respect to regulations but also to search conscientiously for a fundamental consensus about those regulations before moving the coasting trade provisions into law.

Mr. Oberle: Why has he not done it before?

Mr. Goodale: Mr. Speaker, I heard a voice ask why it was not done before. As the hon. member would know if he had studied the debates of this House and the minutes of the standing committee, and the publications issued from time to time by the Department of Transport, this minister and his predecessor have made it very much their business to consult with interest all across the country. The consultations have gone on literally for years and are going on right at this time.

As the minister indicated this afternoon, if it had not been for the unfortunate disruption of air services this past week, officials of the Department of Transport would have been in in the maritime provinces on Monday of last week consulting with senior officials there to determine what further steps needed to be taken to satisfy the genuine needs of some interests across the country. To make a phony allegation that there have not been consultations or a commitment to further consultation is ridiculous.

With respect to the complaints about certain aspects of the statute itself, that is, the wording of the proposal which is before the House, the minister has clearly identified those specific clauses which might be subject to further amendment. This afternoon he placed before the House the substance of three amendments which would serve to meet the complaints raised about various clauses.