

Canada Shipping Act

personally discussed some of the amendments as far back as 1983. Hearings have been held across Canada from St. John's to Vancouver over the last few years. You can see, Mr. Speaker, that industry has been consulted on the amendments put forward in this Bill and has been given the opportunity to have in-put in them.

As with all legislation, I am sure that there are those who will find fault with this Bill, as the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) has already done. I feel confident that the Government will move quickly to make additional amendments to the Canada Shipping Act if and when they become necessary. As I have already said, the amendments in this Bill have been a long time coming and the Bill should be given speedy passage.

This morning the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate referred to the *Ocean Ranger* disaster. I am sure that all of us who know of that disaster were deeply touched by it. The Hon. Member failed to say that his Party was in Government at the time of that disaster. It should have moved quickly at that time to bring in the regulations to which he referred this morning. However, it did not do that. He also failed to point out that Bill C-75 will improve construction and equipment standards of mobile off-shore drilling units such as the *Ocean Ranger*.

I should point out that this Bill provides for the recovery of costs for certain services that are now provided for without charge by the Canadian Coast Guard. It does not set out what the charges will be and I believe that the Government will be discussing the proposed charges fully with industry before any charges are implemented. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because, unlike the previous administration, this Government believes in and practises consultation.

There are many reasons why the amendments in Bill C-75 are put forward. I think we all agree that there is an urgent need to amend the Canada Shipping Act. For several years we have been trying to implement a maritime code in Canada. I do not believe that we can go on without passing amendments to allow the Government to take the necessary action with regard to the construction of ships and to having master's and seaman's certificates improved and modernized. This Bill will also provide for the implementation of the International Maritime Organization convention for the standard of training and for the introduction of medical examinations for seafarers. At the present time I believe that the only medical requirement for anyone obtaining a certificate as a master, mate, or engineer on a ship is to have an eye examination. At times the lives of thousands of people depend on the physical and mental ability of those in charge. The requirement for periodic medical check-ups for officers on ships is long overdue.

I spoke earlier about construction equipment and certification provisions for ships. One of those which will be important is the code for the construction of equipment and ships carrying liquefied gases in bulk and those carrying dangerous cargoes. With regard to the disaster to which I have already referred, I hope that more stringent regulations will be brought in for the construction of drilling rigs and so on. I have to

agree with the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate that the Bill may not go far enough. With oil exploration and development about to take place off the east coast of Canada, there should be more detailed legislation setting out what type of ship should be used. In particular, the legislation should make it compulsory to have ships, other than the traditional supply vessels, standing by the oil rigs. We should follow the example of the United Kingdom, Norway and other countries and make it compulsory to have those stand-by ships in place. I believe the Bill should take that into consideration.

● (1530)

Although the charges have not been set out in this legislation, I am sure that as people from the Department of Transport consult with ship owners and operators in Canada, any increases that must be imposed to recover some of the costs will be modest.

Mr. Henderson: My question for the Hon. Member who just spoke concerns Clause 4 of Bill C-75. That clause explains the purpose of adding more revenues through user fees.

First, I want to draw to the Hon. Member's attention the situation that will be faced by my Province of Prince Edward Island with regard to ice-breaking as a result of Clause 4. As he knows, agriculture is the main industry in Prince Edward Island and potatoes are the primary product grown there. The Hon. Member, being a former sea captain, is aware of the ice conditions in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Northumberland Strait during the winter, when there are two and a half to three months of virtual freeze up. At that time we must rely heavily upon ice-breaking services to ship our produce—mainly potatoes—to market.

Prince Edward Island is a seed growing area. It probably grows the best seed potatoes in the world. In my six years in this place, representing the riding of Egmont, I have been asked by producers and shippers of potatoes on several occasions to obtain the services of an ice-breaker in order to allow vessels in and out of Summerside harbour from where approximately 85 per cent of all potatoes grown on P.E.I. are shipped. The Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) stated that it costs approximately \$1,000 an hour for ice-breaking services. The Hon. Member who just spoke stated that although the regulations would be in the legislation, the user fees may or may not be imposed. I want to tell the Hon. Member that with respect to legislation that is passed, it is too late to close the barn door after the horse has been stolen. Whether it is the present Minister, a Minister of the Government which may follow, or any other Government, if difficult economic times arise, this legislation would be in place and could suddenly become an avenue through which revenues could be taken by a Government. That is why I do not like Clause 4. If the Government does not intend to impose user fees it should say so and delete this Clause. It is too open-ended.

Let me explain the current situation facing the potato industry in my province. The cost of production of potatoes is a bare minimum of 5 cents per pound. The cost to potato