

Maritime Code

not try to complicate the life of every member of this House.

Mr. Watson: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Government of Canada's rejection of unilingualism in the Montreal area and its affirmation that it will proclaim bilingual districts in that area. There is one thing, however, in the government's announcement today which somewhat bothers me: it will not go along with the recommendation that a special commission be set up to study better ways to implement bilingualism. In light of the number of failures in several areas of the bilingualism program, and the lack of real progress in bilingualism, it seems to me this is hardly justifiable on the basis of a tight budget. Does the government have any clear indication that this recommendation for a special commission can be accomplished in a different way? If so, I would like to know what that other way is.

● (1430)

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that the statement I made this morning would have adequately covered this point. In the statement it was pointed out that there are now quite a number of institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, devoting considerable resources and energy to this particular question. It was our view that in a time of restraint we would be merely adding another body devoted to the same task, without any clear assurance that this new body would accomplish more successfully than the existing ones what is being done now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MARITIME CODE ACT

MEASURE TO PROVIDE A MARITIME CODE FOR CANADA

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport) moved that Bill C-61, to provide a maritime code for Canada, to amend the Canada Shipping Act and other acts in consequence thereof and to enact other consequential or related provisions, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

Mr. Ralph E. Goodale (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, they say that becoming a parliamentary secretary is a broadening experience. In my short time in this role I am certainly finding that to be true. As proof positive of that fact, here today is a prairie boy with a farming background and some background in broadcasting and law engaging in discussion on this very important bill in respect of a maritime code for Canada which is, of course, of special interest to Pacific and Atlantic Canada.

Let me say I very much look forward to the debate which will now come forward concerning this legislation, and I am particularly anxious to hear the comments of my colleagues in this House, on all sides, particularly those from the coastal areas. In May of this year, the former

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

minister of transport introduced in this House a most important piece of legislation, Bill C-61, the Maritime Code Act. It is part of a comprehensive program of reform and revision of Canada's shipping law and pursues the modernization of admiralty law provisions which were enacted in the Federal Court Act some years ago.

This bill is intended eventually to replace the Canada Shipping Act and a number of related laws dealing with navigation and shipping. It is a modern statement of Canadian law designed to keep the best of previous statutes and agreements, and at the same time to recognize today's shipping world and its practical complexities.

In spite of amendments to the Canada Shipping Act which have been made over the years, many provisions are obsolete by any modern standard. Contemporary use of water transport for both commercial and recreation purposes has increased substantially, and with that increase there is a growing concern for protection of the rights of all Canadians with respect to the economic, sociological and environmental consequences of that expanded use.

The patchwork-quilt approach of amendments to the Canada Shipping Act has not proved satisfactory, and it is appropriate at this time to carry out an over-all revision of shipping law in the light of current and expected future needs. The study program supporting the revision and reorganization of shipping law is, of course, an ongoing one and it would seem that the most suitable way to proceed with legislative action thereon is to present the material to the House in progressive stages rather than as one single, massive enactment. This provides a better opportunity for informed comment and debate.

It might be useful to outline briefly the physical arrangement of Bill C-61 as it stands now in this stage by stage process. The main body of the bill primarily does two things: it enacts certain provisions with respect to the coasting trade in Canada, pursuant to the Darling report, and it provides the power of authority for the maritime code itself.

That code is to be found set out specifically in schedule III of the bill. The first two schedules deal simply with a series of related and consequential amendments which flow from the act. They also provide a vehicle for phasing out the old Canada Shipping Act over time, and the phasing in of the new code.

The maritime code as set out in the third schedule consists of two major sections, or books as they are called, of maritime law. The first deals with general matters; the second deals with ships. When fully completed by subsequent legislative action, the code will consist of five major books altogether. The three yet to come will relate to the law on crew standards, cargo and cargo safety, and operational standards. While the total act will necessarily be a detailed and lengthy document, some appreciation of its intent can be gained by looking at a few of the major provisions in a summary way.

First, the act will apply to all Canadian ships no matter where they may sail. It will also have force over all foreign vessels operating in Canadian waters. This means Canada will control all shipping in its own waters but will also be in a position to answer for Canadian ships anywhere in the world.