

*Government Orders*

very good hockey team, there is a very good shipbuilding facility which is seriously underutilized.

That facility, which was built in the 1950s, is well-equipped and has within ready reach qualified and capable individuals experienced in shipbuilding. It sits to a large extent idle. One of the tragedies of that particular visit was to see some trawlers docked beside the shipbuilding facility, not because they were there for repairs or refitting, but because they were idle and needed to be tied to the wharf as a place to sit at rest in view of the crisis that exists in the fishing sector.

What I wonder is whether the Government of Canada has come to terms with the fact that this very important industry, shipbuilding, is continually in a state of crisis. We are seeing shipyards closed. We are seeing highly qualified, well-trained individuals put out of work with little immediate hope for finding other work before retraining. You cannot take a man who has spent 20 years in a shipyard, welding heavy sheets of metal, and train him to be a computer operator. Some of the men I saw could not operate a keyboard, their fingers were so thick. These are skilled, able-bodied, dedicated people with a reputation for quality and craftsmanship who are a terrible waste for our country as their shipyards sit idle.

What are we going to do about it? As far as I can tell, the government's only policy is to rationalize.

• (1210)

Rationalizing is a polite word for putting people out of work. It is a polite word for saying we have given up on shipbuilding in Canada; we are going to scale it down until there are fewer and fewer yards, fewer and fewer people involved in the industry and less and less work going on on Canadian ships being built by Canadians to serve the Canadian trade.

There are many problems that have given rise to this, not all of which are under the control of any government. What seems clear in reviewing this situation with people in the yards and with policy makers is that underlying many of the problems faced by the Canadian shipbuilding industry is the practice by many, many countries of heavily subsidizing this industry.

The result is that even where we have state of the art shipyards with very well qualified shipbuilders, we find that they are unable to compete with shipyards in countries whose governments are prepared to under-

write in part and in very extensive amounts, very large amounts, the cost of the construction of a ship.

Why do other governments do that? They do it to keep their yards open, to keep them employed, to maintain the critical mass of shipbuilders and of very important industrial facilities.

Why should it be stopped? It should be stopped because it makes no sense whatsoever for the taxpayers of Brazil, Belgium, Holland or any other country to subsidize the cost of ships that are being constructed for use by ship owners in other countries or even in their own country. It does not make sense. It costs everybody. Everyone loses.

Why is Canada out there in the forefront of cutting off any kind of support for this vital industry? Why, instead, is Canada not in the forefront of countries saying we will protect our shipbuilders because we have to until we can get everybody or at least the important countries to realize that this is a lose-lose proposition.

Again, why do we go to the bargaining table every time, having already given up our best advantages? I urge the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology to come down to Marystown. I am sure my colleague from Burin—St. George's would be happy to give him the same tour.

Let him come down to Marystown and the other shipyards in Atlantic Canada to see what they have there. Let him address his mind to the problem of an industry being killed because Canada has failed to act to protect its vital interests in the face of unfair competition from elsewhere in the world.

How can you expect the reinvestment in science and technology, in research and development and in the latest methods of shipbuilding in the face of heavy government subsidization on other countries? If that does not happen, then sooner or later, we will be uncompetitive and we will have no way of rebuilding what we once had.

The time for action is now. Unfortunately, when you look at Bill C-33, however well it serves the immediate concerns of the coastal shipping trade, it fails totally to look at the bigger picture in Canada's shipbuilding industry. It reveals once again the complete lack of industrial policy that this government has in this sector, as in so many other sectors, in order to deal with what is