

Navigable Waters Protection Act

of seamen and provision for any fraudulent representations in that connection, we already have a framework which, possibly with some judicious amendment, would take care of this particular situation. It would cover the dangers outlined by the Minister of Justice, without making the special provisions outlined here that, in effect, give unlimited powers to the governor in council, who would have discretion to make regulations covering the danger of sabotage in the great lakes area. It seems to me some consideration should be given as to whether it would not be possible to deal with the matter under the existing statute. I, for one, would like to hear from the responsible minister some explanation as to why the government apparently prefers to take this approach by the introduction of this new part to the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transport, when he spoke introducing this legislation, said that like ancient Gaul it was divided into three parts. I believe it was the Right Hon. R. B. Bennett, or if not it was someone in his day in parliament—no, it comes to me now that it was the late Sam Jacobs—who, when confronted with a piece of legislation which had been characterized in that way, replied “Yes, but all the gall is in the third part.” That is the way we feel about this bill. There is a good deal of gall in the third part; indeed the government has a good deal of gall in bringing this matter before parliament.

The offensive part of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is the part having to do with the continuing in force of the regulations affecting great lakes seamen, and it is that which has been discussed for the most part by those who have taken part in this debate. May I point out that this part of the legislation deals with persons, with security and with crimes. Surely, if legislation of this kind was to be brought before parliament it should have been brought in in the name of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson). If it could be argued that it had something to do with labour matters, perhaps there might have been an excuse for it being brought in in the name of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg). But certainly, this provision has no relation to the protection of navigable waters.

In that connection, Mr. Speaker, I am going to make a confession. That may not be a good thing to do in these parts, but I shall take a chance. It happens that the group to which I belong has given me as whip, amongst other duties, the duty of

watching the legislation that comes along and making sure that all matters that we want to discuss are brought to the notice of the particular members in our group who specialize in particular fields.

I knew that legislation respecting great lakes seamen was coming. I saw references in the press to the fact this matter had been discussed in the other place, and I was watching for it. I had already indicated to certain members in our group that when it came here I would draw it to their attention. I believe members generally will agree that not many things around here escape my notice. Despite all that, despite the fact I was watching for this legislation, I missed it. I did not think, when I saw a bill to amend the Navigable Waters Protection Act, there would be buried in it a section the purpose of which was to carry forward the great lakes seamen's regulations which were in effect under the Emergency Powers Act.

Now, I make that confession to underline the fact the third part of this bill really has no place in this legislation at all. The Minister of Justice, in his plausible attempt to defend this legislation, talked about the right or duty of the government to take certain elementary precautions. What were the precautions he said the government should take? He said that they should prevent that small minority, and he put it that way, who may be likely to engage in sabotage of one kind or another from obtaining employment on ships plying the great lakes system of this country. That is all he talked about.

Mr. Garson: My hon. friend does not put that in precisely the way I put it.

Mr. Knowles: I will permit the minister to do it, then.

Mr. Garson: I said, gaining access to a position in which they could commit acts of sabotage; there is quite a difference.

Mr. Knowles: But the section relates to, and puts it in these words, “respecting the employment of seamen on board Canadian ships in the great lakes”. I think that, regardless of the words the minister has now used, I have to interpret what he has now said as relating to the gaining of employment on ships plying the great lakes. When one couples what was said by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) with what was said by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg), it seems to me it is clear that what is involved in the regulations to be made under this section is the question of employment on ships plying the great lakes.