

Canada Shipping Act

stated that the Seaway should be recognized as an international marine gateway to Canada, in competition and on an equal basis with Canada's other coasts and, therefore, that all charges related to the operation of the Seaway be considered together and from a global perspective, with the objective that federal charges be uniform in application from port to port and coast to coast, whether imposed by federal legislation, such as the proposed Clause 4 of Bill C-75, or initiated by a Crown corporation, such as tolls imposed by the Seaway Authority.

Of course, the brief makes it clear that simply introducing Clause 4 in Bill C-75 and giving it passage without prior consultation cannot ensure that no negative impact will befall our Great Lake shippers and, indeed, those people who use the Port of Thunder Bay.

The brief goes on to state that the Seaway system is in a crisis situation and may not survive, and that government-imposed and regulated charges now make it the most expensive waterway in North America, that is, those charges in place even before the passage of Bill C-75 and Clause 4. The future charges envisioned by planned programs of cost recovery may cause the demise of the St. Lawrence Seaway, indeed, by extrapolation, the demise of the current position of the Port of Montreal, as well. That is why one of the overwhelming preoccupations at the Montreal Economic Summit that was held last week, indeed, at the shipbuilders' meeting that was held at Sept Îles, was Bill C-75 and the negative impacts of Clause 4 on the shipping industry.

I understand, as well, that yesterday the company, N.N. Patterson and Son, Limited, also made a submission to the subcommittee on the St. Lawrence Seaway, and it went on to state, "Of particular concern to us in this unhealthy circle of demise of the Seaway is Clause 4 of Bill C-75, enabling legislation for Coast Guard recovery, the implementation of which has not only potentially disastrous consequences for Great Lake seaway marine transportation but also for our home port of Thunder Bay, which is additionally of special concern to us.

While others may have sounded a middle-ground position on the proposed legislation, we want to go on record as being categorically opposed to Coast Guard user fees, and we strongly urge the Government to remove Clause 4 at the present time. In our view, it is not at all a question of obligation, any more than it is a matter of fairness". Let Hon. Members roll that word, "fairness" around in their minds and try to relate to it once again. They have been here too long, I submit. They have forgotten that basic concept of fairness. The company went on to state, "not only is it a matter of fairness but also a situation where additional charges in the face of our already burdensome and constantly rising cost infrastructure have pushed us to the limit of our competitive margin. In fact, there are many in our industry who believe we have already crossed the precarious threshold".

That is what those people who are out there employing Canadians, who are the engine of growth that makes this country go, who generate those new jobs about which the

Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) likes to speak, what those in the private sector, free enterprise, innovators, risk-takers, are saying about this legislation. That is what those people who are not Crown corporations, who are not authorities, who are not associations, but, rather, individuals who are prepared to go out and compete in a fair environment, are saying about this legislation, that it will push them over the edge and destroy an industry that is currently existing at a precarious balance. Still, Hon. Members opposite, the moment I sit down, will be happy to see this Bill pass Parliament with all of the consequent negative implications for Canadian citizens, primary producers and, indeed, shippers.

Algoma Steel, Stelco and Dofasco also went on record before the committee on Bill C-75 to oppose Clause 4. The Canadian Harbour Commission pointed out that there is great potential for discrimination in such open-ended legislation as that proposed in the new Clause 4 against Canadian ports. The International Association of Great Lakes Ports indicates it is opposed to Clause 4. It states that charges imposed as a result of Clause 4 will cause deterioration in an already risky situation.

It is absolutely amazing. It must dumbfound Canadians to see that I can stand here and literally quote every single facet of the marine industry, every single potential user group, every single primary producer in Canada, to know that all of these people have come to the Government of Canada, have made their case and, notwithstanding the opinions that have been put forward, Bill C-75 is still before the House. It makes Canadians just a little bit suspicious, just a little bit reluctant to swallow, hook, line and sinker, the "brand-new day for Canada" vision that the Prime Minister held out for all of us during the summer of 1984. It makes Canadians doubt, just a little bit, that promise of a new era of consultation and co-operation with the people of Canada. It makes one just a little bit, only slightly, cynical about some of the pronouncements of the Prime Minister with respect to the nature of the administration he would lead in this country.

There are some Hon. Members from Quebec on the Government side of the House indeed, some Ministers, who attended the Montreal Economic Summit only last week, and they will not be surprised to know that the Montreal Chamber of Commerce, when it appeared before our committee, was not stating anything different than it was stating last week at the Economic Summit. It was stating, "Dump Clause 4. If it cannot be dumped, let us not have Bill C-75". Nevertheless, at the time it appeared before our committee—

Mr. Forrestall: Do you intend to let us have it today? Why don't you tell us that?

Mr. Tobin: Tell you what, my friend?

Mr. Forrestall: Do you intend to let us have it today or are you going to speak until five o'clock?

Mr. Tobin: The Montreal Chamber of Commerce was stating that in the case of Section 4 of Bill C-75, there has