

Mr. CASGRAIN: In French or in English: either will satisfy me.

Mr. POULIOT: I would advise my hon. friend in the meantime to learn French on the bilingual currency.

Mr. DURANLEAU (Translation): May I inform my hon. friend that there is no provision in the act which obliges the minister to hold an inquiry in case of an accident.

Mr. CASGRAIN (Translation): There is a provision which states that each time a maritime wreck or accident takes place, an inquiry must be held.

Mr. DURANLEAU (Translation): Section 762 of the act is as follows:

The minister may appoint any officer of the government of Canada, or any judge of any court of record, or any local judge in admiralty of the Exchequer Court of Canada, or any stipendiary or police magistrate, to be a commissioner to hold formal investigations, or any formal investigation, and a commissioner shall for that purpose be a court.

Therefore, it is not compulsory.

Mr. CASGRAIN (Translation): Is it by virtue of this section that Captain Demers acts as commissioner of inquiry?

Mr. DURANLEAU (Translation): It is by virtue of this section that Captain Demers acts as Commissioner of Inquiry when the minister considers it necessary to hold such an inquiry.

Mr. CASGRAIN (Translation): He is appointed each time, in each particular case, to hold an inquiry?

Mr. DURANLEAU (Translation): No, he is officially appointed, but we instruct him to hold such and such an inquiry when we consider it necessary that an inquiry should be held.

Mr. CASGRAIN (Translation): I realize that in the cases quoted by the minister, there might be special reasons for not holding an inquiry; however, in the case to which I referred, a few moments ago, it was unnecessary, to my mind, to hold an inquiry, and the fact that the department ordered an inquiry put this pilot, at the time, to heavy costs. He was afterwards absolved of all blame, but nevertheless had to pay the costs of a protracted inquiry when there was really no reason to order an inquiry. Perhaps there are two weights and two measures in special cases.

Mr. FAFARD (Translation): The crossing at St. Roch is known as one of the most dangerous spots to ships on the St. Lawrence [Mr. Duranleau.]

river. At that point a float was built some years ago, but it is on the eve of disappearing. This place is known, in the language of navigators, under the name of "Rock Algernon." I wish to inquire from the Minister of Marine whether it would be possible to grant the request of pilots and the shipping federation and make considerable repairs to this float. It is a very dangerous spot. Last summer, I think that a few ships met with accidents there. I had occasion last year while travelling on a vessel, to view this float. Half of it has been washed away. The swiftness of the current at that point is 8 miles per hour. The material damages caused to ships within the last two years amounts to as much as it would have cost to repair that float. I think it would be more appropriate to make the necessary outlay to repair that float than to dredge the north channel of the St. Lawrence river. I am not opposed to the dredging of the north channel, however, with the present depression, when the government's financial situation is bad, I think that such works could be postponed, and that we could, as in the past, make use of the south channel.

I shall avail myself of this opportunity to request the hon. minister not to reduce this year the piloting rates. I think I read in some newspapers, these last days, that the shipping federation again insisted this year that the pilotage rates should be reduced. Pilots have certainly a right to our gratitude for the services they render, and by treating them rightly we could obtain from them a still better service.

Since I am on the subject of pilots may I refer to the apprentice pilots. At present, these young men who are obliged to do an apprenticeship of five or six years, cannot find work on the vessels of the Canadian merchant marine. I think they should be given the preference over all others, especially over foreigners, so that they can complete their apprenticeship and later become captains of ocean going ships or excellent pilots. I have no reproach to make against the Minister of Marine in connection with the apprentice pilots, he has but followed the routine established fifteen or twenty years ago, however, I think that the request I have just made should be granted.

Mr. CASGRAIN (Translation): I was unaware that the question of pilots could be discussed on this item of the estimates. I therefore seize the opportunity to put in a word. Pilots have certainly rights. I am aware that in the past, under all regimes, under this government as well as under previous governments, there has always been