

Canada Shipping Act

Mr. Baker: Yes. Here he is with problems in his motor 100 miles out in the ocean and he will hesitate to phone the Coast Guard.

This Bill is an absolute affront to all boat owners in Canada. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie) is in his place today and I am sure that he will check the Terms of Union between Canada and Newfoundland because I believe, from my reading of that document, that this Bill violates the Terms of Union. It says that this service will be provided by the Government of Canada. Not for a charge; it will be provided in a continuing fashion. All in all, as the hon. gentleman pointed out, this clause in the Bill is absolutely disastrous for the fishermen in all of Canada, on the East Coast or the West Coast.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, the implication of the comments made by the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) are, of course, that it is the Government's intention to charge 100 per cent of the cost. There is no intention of doing that whatsoever. It would be against the great traditions of this House and successive Governments over the lifetime of our country to attempt to do that. What we are attempting to do is to put in place enabling legislation to recover some of these costs. We presently recover about 2.4 per cent of marine costs. Who does the Hon. Member think is paying for it now?

Mr. Gauthier: All taxpayers.

Mr. Forrestall: Who pays for the dredging of the harbour? There is no harbour in Ottawa-Vanier.

Mr. Gauthier: That does not matter.

Mr. Forrestall: But you pay for it.

Mr. Gauthier: Yes.

Mr. Forrestall: So why don't the users of harbours, the ones who benefit directly, begin to pay a little bit more?

Mr. Gauthier: I can't believe you, Michael.

Mr. Tobin: I am going to send this speech back home.

Mr. Forrestall: Another comment which should be made, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Tobin: Who pays for the Ottawa airport? Not the people in small fishing harbours. They do not use it but who pays for it? The taxpayer.

Mr. Forrestall: The air services, for the Hon. Member's edification, recover about 35 per cent or 36 per cent of their cost. If we are to continue the level of service which is enjoyed by fishermen and small craft owners, not to mention the commercial services and bulk carriers, then funds have to be found to maintain navigational aids, dredging and ice clearance.

Mr. Tobin: Who pays for the National Capital Commission?

Mr. Forrestall: Money has to be found and where does the Hon. Member think the money is coming from? He knows that this Government is obliged to pursue deficit reduction. This is what we are doing. When the Hon. Member or any Hon. Member rises in this Chamber and suggests that through Bill C-75 the Government is attempting to recover 100 per cent of these costs, he is misleading the people in the Chamber and the people in the country.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Forrestall), who obviously knows the Government's policy, is saying it is not going to charge 100 per cent of the cost. I wonder whether it is 99 per cent, 98 per cent, 50 per cent, 10 per cent, or 2 per cent of the cost of an ice-breaker. An ice-breaker costs about \$1,000 an hour. What is the cost to the people of Canada? He talks about saving money. The Government did not think about saving money when it recently allocated \$1 billion for the bail-out of certain uninsured depositors in a bank. It did not think about saving money when it spent over \$10 million to put a communications system in the Prime Minister's office. It did not think about saving money when it increased the staff by 54 per cent to 120 people.

● (1520)

That argument does not apply in this case when we are talking about our primary producers, safety at sea, and trying to assist poor fishermen in the country at this time of the year. That argument just does not hold any water at all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The period for questions and comments is now terminated. The Hon. Member for Bonavista-Trinity-Conception (Mr. Johnson) on debate.

Mr. Morrissey Johnson (Bonavista-Trinity-Conception): Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak on Bill C-75 I would like to say that I believe that most of the amendments contained in this Bill are long overdue and I certainly hope that the Bill will be given quick passage by the House. I feel that all Canadian seafarers and all seafarers who ply Canadian waters will be glad to hear of the emphasis in this Bill on safety at sea. As well as enhancing safety at sea, this Bill will enable Canada to deal more effectively with matters associated with the prevention and clean-up of marine pollution and will provide an improved scheme for attributing liability and paying compensation for all pollution damage caused by ships at sea. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the amendments will enable Canada to ratify a number of important international maritime conventions which we have been unable to do because of the lack of enabling legislation.

I believe that Canadians can and should be proud of the Canadian Coast Guard as it presently exists. This Bill has been drafted to allow the introduction of additional Coast Guard services such as aids to navigation, ice-breaking and dredging.

I am sure that Hon. Members will appreciate my reference to the fact that most of the amendments put forth in this Bill have been discussed in public hearings across Canada. I have