

Government Orders

Major users of these ports include the New Brunswick Power Corporation, Stone Consolidated, Repap Enterprises, Acadia Forest Products, Northwood Pulp and Timber and the major oil companies, all of which depend upon support from Coast Guard icebreakers. Should ice conditions prohibit vessel arrivals for Repap Enterprise at Newcastle, the mill will find itself in a very difficult situation, as it depends on the regular supply of clay slurry to keep the mill in production. Any long-term disruption in the arrival of Repap vessels will likely result in mill shutdowns affecting approximately 700 to 800 mill employees.

I think that the impact of not having icebreakers for public port operation in northeastern New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island area could be devastating, particularly in the economic sense, vis-a-vis the lost wages for farmers and shippers involved in the potato industry and future losses in export due to the unreliable supply.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I think I have shown the dramatic impact of the present situation on the operation of the St. Lawrence Seaway, which is essential to the movement of grain from the Prairies. I mentioned the serious repercussions on the St. Lawrence, which is a sort of transportation pipeline to our industrial heartland. I also drew attention to the negative impact for Canadians in other regions of the country. Financial losses are increasing daily. This is really a national problem which must be solved with great urgency.

Madam Speaker, I would like to present the following motion to the House:

[*English*]

That the House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of continuing second reading consideration of Bill C-49.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Would all members opposed to the motion please rise.

And more than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Since fifteen or more members have risen, the motion is deemed to have been withdrawn, pursuant to Standing Order 26(2).

Motion withdrawn.

[*English*]

Mr. Tobin: Madam Speaker, I just want to put one question to the Minister of Transport.

The government and the minister want Canadians to believe that Canadians generally and, in particular, certain sectors would be at a disadvantage because of the delay in the passage of this legislation. The blunt reality is that the government has had this issue for 22 months.

It should be noted in this House that when this kind of legislation has come before the House, as the member for Ottawa West has pointed out repeatedly over the last number of days, while it is true that opposition parties have voted against it, very seldom has there been a decision by the Opposition not to facilitate in every way possible the passage of the legislation; that is, the requirement for votes at every stage to the point where the government has been forced to use closure.

Fundamentally, the difference this time is that in our hearts and when we consult our conscience the Opposition knows that there has not been an honest attempt at collective bargaining on the government side. It simply has not been there for nearly two years. That is not the job of the Minister of Transport, it is the job of the President of the Treasury Board.

It is ironic, seeing that this government is led by the Prime Minister who made his reputation as a dynamic labour lawyer, that the legislation provides for two conciliation boards but, in both cases, the chairmen were picked by the government with no consultation with the unions involved.

There is a fundamental issue here. It is possible that some people will be inconvenienced and will be hurt, but it has to be said and it has to be clear that that is not the fault of health services workers who want equal pay for work of equal value. That is not the fault of people who work on ships at sea for 28 days at a time serving their nation, the second largest marine nation in the world. It is not the fault of those employees. It is the fault of a government that never intended to negotiate honestly,