

Government Orders

1984 it wants to revitalize and make prosperous the shipbuilding industry, it meant it.

I say send out the signal that when the government in 1985 began to dismantle programs to aid the shipbuilding industry, it was really a *faux pas*. It really did not mean to do that, and it would like to have another chance before it is judged by the electorate on those points.

I see my time is running out. I, with my colleagues, support the principle of the bill. Our one regret—it is a very big regret—is that the government did not use this legislation as an opportunity to give a shot in the arm to revitalize a shipbuilding industry that is in very desperate straits.

Mr. Manley: Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order. We have one additional speaker on this side, my colleague from Dartmouth.

I understand that there is unanimous consent. Particularly, the parliamentary secretary is anxious to hear what my colleague from Dartmouth has to say. He has told me. I understand there would be unanimous consent not to see the clock at 1 p.m. so that my colleague can complete his remarks. We can put the question at that time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent that the Speaker does not see the time at one o'clock?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues in the House for being so generous, and also the Speaker for being blinded at one o'clock.

My colleague from Burin—St. George's is always a hard act to follow because he is one of the best people in the House to express his point of view not just on behalf of his constituents, but on behalf of many Canadians. He has a unique ability to take complex issues and put them in human terms, and that is what he has done here.

I will try not to abuse the generosity of the House. I have a few comments to make on the bill.

It seems that all parties have somewhat agreed that this bill is long overdue and that it offers a degree of incentive and protection for the Canadian shipping

industry. There seems to be some unanimous agreement among the three official parties that this is the type of bill that should go through.

I am unfortunately going to echo a little bit of the sentiments of my colleague from Burin—St. George's. As he so aptly put it when he was using the poverty analogy, there would be no poverty in Canada if you listed all of the exception and the exemptions from the definition of poverty.

The reality of the situation today is that the Canadian shipbuilding industry is in great peril. There are many who would indicate that the days have passed when the Canadian shipbuilding industry could compete internationally.

We are finding increasingly that even on Canadian small fishing vessels that are being constructed on the east coast, Canadian shipyards, among the most efficient in the world, are simply unable to compete for that type of vessel construction.

This particular bill addresses some of the problems and some of the concerns. It addresses shipping that takes place within Canada's coastal area and that is why it is called the Coasting Trade Act. It will offer perhaps some incentive for the shipping companies that are involved in coastal trade in Canada to look at purchasing or building Canadian-made vessels.

The reality of the situation is that there are a lot of exemptions in this bill. One of the big requirements that we have here is that the vessel used in coasting trade in Canada, in order to be licensed, either has to be constructed in Canada or has to have tariff paid.

• (1300)

The tariff for a new vessel is about 25 per cent. The reality of the international situation is that of all the modern shipbuilding nations in the world, the subsidies that are offered by each and every one of the governments of those nations are extremely high. The only place the subsidy is not offered in the major shipbuilding nations in the world is in Canada.

My colleague from the New Democratic Party from Thunder Bay—Atikokan had indicated that the past Liberal government did have a policy and a program in order to assist in creating a level playing field.