

Canada Shipping Act

However, the substance of the Hon. Member's remarks was that all kinds of studies have been done and the Hon. Member for the Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) made exactly the same point. No one has argued to the contrary. Of course, there have been studies done. Two paramount studies have been mentioned by several Hon. Members. One study is the Lancaster Sound study, which was extensive and indepth, and the other was the Beaufort Environmental Assessment Review Panel—which has the unfortunate designation of BEARP—which is one of the most significant studies. It was a three-year study which, in my view, ought to carry a considerable amount of weight in the decision-making by this Government.

My question to the Hon. Member for Skeena is with respect to those studies and any other studies of which he is aware. What are his views as to what reservations or cautions are pointed to regarding unrestricted enhanced oil tanker shipping through the Arctic waters of the Northwest Passage?

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. The point was raised earlier with regard to all of the studies which have been done. It is quite true that there have been a large number of studies, particularly in terms of the Arctic. The problem is that almost none of the recommendations have been implemented. The studies have been the basic building block to bring this Chamber to a position where we in fact could make intelligent, sound, reasonable and scientific-based decisions in implementing them as legislation.

I am sure that many native people were on vessels in the Arctic, that they came on board and talked about environmental studies and so on. One of the reasons there is so much cynicism, particularly north of 60, is that there are a lot of bureaucrats, scientists, a lot of studies and public hearings, and although that process is good because it helps northerners and Canadians generally to come to certain conclusions, we are not carrying forward what we should, the step beyond, which is to implement, in the interest of northerners, of Canada and of the world, sound procedures. I do not think we can just charge head on without taking into very serious account what publicly funded panels such as the Beaufort Environmental Review Panel recommended in terms of having two class 10 ice-breaking tankers in order to ensure that if one was bound in ice, there would be an opportunity for assistance. I believe many people tend to think of the Arctic as just a great area which is ice bound a lot of the time, which is cold and windy and we do not really need to worry about it. It is a desert, Mr. Speaker, and it is a very profoundly sensitive desert. Large pools of black material in an area of 24-hour a day sunlight where the accompanying environment is principally white, water or a bit of rock, is a situation which scientists around the world are only just now setting their minds to in terms of what the implications would be. I do not think we can just run willy-nilly into these kinds of situations, Mr. Speaker. Surely there is enough depth in this Chamber to allow us to address the very real environmental, scientific and aboriginal concerns rather than casting them aside saying that we have studied them to death already.

● (1520)

Mrs. Blais-Grenier: Mr. Speaker, I will start with a very brief comment and then I have a question. I am very happy indeed that the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) has recognized the very real and important improvements that are brought about through the safety measures and standards in this legislation. I can assure the Member that our consultation was very wide. We consulted a variety of groups and interested parties. We were seeking some information from the Hon. Member's Party and we did not get a complete answer. I would like to know, as would my colleague the Hon. Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski), what percentage of the cost of transportation users should pay if he believes in that.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to address that because no one from the Department of Transport ever contacted me with regard to my responsibilities for northern development.

Mrs. Blais-Grenier: We asked you in the House.

Mr. Fulton: To make the record clear, I am saying that I was never requested either to study or to prepare that kind of a response.

With regard to user-pay, in terms of the fishing industry, the shipping of wheat and so on, there is already an abundance of money paid in either directly through the economy or through the production and export of those commodities. Therefore, to ask a fisherman having his vessel rescued off the coast of Prince Rupert to pay to be escorted back into the port by a Coast Guard vessel is absolutely ridiculous. I would encourage Government Members to give speeches in Prince Rupert explaining why they think that kind of user-pay approach should be applied.

One of the points made by the Member for Western Arctic with regard to the accompaniment of vessels by a Canadian Coast Guard ice-breaker must be addressed by the House. That is a very, very costly process. I would agree that the users of that type of service, which incurs an enormous direct cost onto the Crown of Canada, should be considered. The committee should look at that carefully. It should consider which other routings are being competed with and what the real costs are. I was demonstrated last year that many pleasure craft operators, fishermen, tugboat operators and shippers off the coast of British Columbia did not get adequate weather information in advance. I cannot imagine why those people would be asked to pay for Coast Guard escorts back into port. This year alone the fishing industry in British Columbia will provide over \$500 million to the Canadian economy. I cannot see sticking fishermen with the costs of navigational aids.

Mrs. Blais-Grenier: Mr. Speaker, I am still in the dark here. From reading *Hansard* it seems to me that there is some discrepancy in the positions alluded to by various Members of the NDP on the question of user fees and the portion that should be paid by the user. We were never able to get a straight answer on that. With regard to weather forecasting services, I am sure that the Member is aware that that is within the realm of another Department.