

Canada Shipping Act

colleagues have certainly articulated at committee stage and during second reading our concerns about Clause 4.

Clause 4 gives the Minister the ability to impose user fees with respect to the Canadian Coast Guard services. Not only is the very issue repugnant and sets a very dangerous precedent indicating where the Government wishes to go, but the way in which it is being done is equally repugnant. The substance of what Clause 4 imposes is wrong and the process leading up to that determination was equally wrong.

When talking about the process, I am talking about the lack of consultation that has taken place between the Government and the various interest groups affected by Bill C-75. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and Government Members have risen repeatedly to talk about a Government for the people by the people. In legislation after legislation, we have seen evidence that that is simply rhetoric. It is simply a public relations façade that is not to be found in the legislation that this national forum discusses day in and day out.

Once again, we are discussing a piece of legislation which purports to help the people affected by the Shipping Act, but what do we see? Group after group has come before us to say: "For God's sake, please do something about Clause 4". We in this Party moved amendments to lift Clause 4 because it is harmful to the communities that this Bill purports to help.

This Bill affects not only the recreational boaters but also the shipping industry which is in very serious trouble. Members of Parliament who represent shipping communities have, during Statements Pursuant to Standing Order 21 and Question Period, tried to bring some sense of the importance of enhancing our shipping industry to the attention of the Cabinet. The Government has the audacity to put Clause 4 in the legislation, a clause that would give the Minister the power to charge user fees to these very constituencies.

Shipping concerns in this country calculate their shipping tonnages in cents, not dollars, and this would tend to communicate to us that their cost benefit analyses are so close that they are calculating pennies. Here the Government has an \$8-million envelope the costs of which it is thinking of passing on to those shipping firms.

Mr. Tobin: Whether they get the services or not.

Mr. Marchi: Whether they get the services or not, they make their calculations on the basis of pennies. They are coming to their Members of Parliament to say that their industry is in a crisis.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If my distinguished colleague had bothered to read the Bill, he would have known that charges will not be imposed upon those users for whom the services are not normally available. I think he has some responsibility to the Bill to stay somewhat in order and to be aware of that of which he is speaking.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order, it is a matter for debate.

Mr. Marchi: Not only is it not a point of honour—of order, rather, because there is no honour—

Mr. Forrestall: It is a point of honour.

Mr. Marchi: The Hon. Member has been here longer than I have so I am somewhat surprised at him. Second, we have not yet seen a schedule of fees. If the Hon. Member has a schedule of fees, I would ask him to have the courage and conviction to table it and ask us to discuss it. Before he does that, I do not think he should rise, something which he is about to do once again.

Mr. Forrestall: Would you please give him even a cursory briefing as to what this is all about, Brian?

Mr. Marchi: I would like to bring to the attention of the House the fact that the Hon. Member has made suggestions before about the responsibilities of Hon. Members from Toronto and from the Province of Ontario to rise to speak on this issue. It behooves the Hon. Member to make those suggestions because in addition to representing the constituents we were elected to represent, it is an obligation for every Member of the House to rise to make contributions.

In this particular instance, we are talking about the definition of Canada. While this Bill will affect those in and around Toronto and the Province of Ontario, and particularly recreational boaters, we are really talking about the perverse Conservative definition of regional development. This Bill more than any other will affect the smaller communities of this country, particularly the East and West Coast communities that rely day in and day out on fishing and other commercial activities for a livelihood.

It is fine to say that this Bill will affect weekend boaters but this Bill will really hurt those individual communities that are already hard pressed to survive under the Conservative Government. Representatives of those very communities expect people like the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary and his colleagues to rise in their places and make representations that will defend their constituents rather than simply defend the indefensible legislation put forward by the Government. That is why we on this side of the House have no embarrassment and make no apology for once again pleading with the Government to hear the cries of our hinterlands.

● (1650)

We plead with Government Members to place this clause in abeyance until they have had a chance to speak to the groups who have been calling us, writing us, and saying that the Government is moving in the wrong direction. If we in the House are prepared to introduce legislation to amend the Canada Shipping Act to improve the lot of various constituencies, they should at least have the courage and respect to listen to the interest groups they are purporting to help.

This Bill is analogous to other pieces of legislation which we have seen, such as Bill C-62. The Government is claiming that