

Canada Shipping Act

Let me talk about the North. The Government of Canada's policy with respect to the North is, to say the least, akin to being insane. It is not addressed in this Bill. For the first time in the history of our country the Government of the United States, without asking our permission, without a care for what our feelings are on the subject, sailed the *Polar Sea* through our territorial waters. That has never happened before. It has only happened since the Government said: "We will always give the Americans the benefit of the doubt". The Americans took advantage of that commitment by the Prime Minister. They said: "Let's go doughtily through the Canadian territorial waters and let us not even bother asking".

What does our Government do? The Government announces to the House that the only reason the Americans went through the Northwest Passage was as a result of the previous administration having left us without a vessel to stop them. Can you imagine the mentality? The only reason the Americans boiled through and churned up our waters is that we did not have the artillery to stop them. On the one hand the Government says that, and on the other hand the Government says that the Americans are our best friends and that we will always give them the benefit of the doubt. You cannot have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. The Americans did not go steaming through our waters because there was not the equipment necessary to stop them. That is not why they went through. The Americans went through because for the first time in decades they saw a Government that claimed at every single step that it would give them the benefit of the doubt. The Americans made a passage through Canada's waters as a way of indicating for future court references that they do not acknowledge our jurisdiction nor our territories.

How do you establish a territory in any kind of a case? You establish it primarily by occupancy, by living in it, occupying it and using it. What does the Government of Canada do to makes its case for sovereignty? Does it assist the people who live in the North because they are our best guarantee of sovereignty? The people who live there call themselves Canadians.

Mr. Robichaud: They are Canadians.

Mr. Tobin: They are Canadians. Canadians are occupying the North. Therefore we occupy the land. Therefore our case is *de facto* made. Does the Government say: "We have to assist the people who live in the North? We must not put any more charges on the people in the North", as is being proposed by Clause 4 of the Bill? Does the Government say that? No, Mr. Speaker. The Government says that it is going to penalize people for living in the North.

Mr. Riis: Make life miserable for them.

Mr. Tobin: That is right, "We are going to make life miserable for the people who live in Canada's North. We are going to charge them to live there". It is going to cost those people more. Then, to handle our sovereignty problem, the Government is going to build a \$500 million ice-breaker so

that nobody does anything as a knee-jerk reaction to the American passage of the *Polar Sea* through our waters.

Mr. Robichaud: To keep the Americans out.

Mr. Tobin: Yes, to keep the Americans out. The Americans are really shaking in their boots. Would it not be much better to spend the \$25 million to dredge the Mackenzie, which runs from Pine Point in the Northwest Territories—yes, it does—and Great Slave Lake straight through to the Beaufort Sea?

Mr. Robichaud: Tuktoyaktuk.

Mr. Tobin: Tuktoyaktuk, that is right. Would it not be better to spend \$25 million there rather than spend \$500 million on an ice-breaker? Would that not be much better? It would make the life of that community that much more rewarding. Would it not be better to remove the airport tax on people in the North who do not fly by air because it is a pleasant way to go but because there is no other way to go in the winter? Roads are impassable. Water transportation is frozen. The only way they can move is by air. There is no choice. That is it, and yet we tax those people in the North exactly as we would tax somebody leaving Toronto going to West Palm Beach on holidays. Isn't that ridiculous, Mr. Speaker?

Would it not be much better to say to the people who live in Canada's North that we are going to retain in those isolated communities basic means of transportation? In so far as summer operation is concerned, we should open up the Dempster Highway and upgrade it rather than spend \$500 million on an ice-breaker. The Government again is more interested in managing public opinion than in managing the problem, and public opinion demanded that the Prime Minister pound his chest and say "We are going to build a half a million dollar ice-breaker".

We know how the Prime Minister thinks. He takes Hercules aircraft full of audio and video equipment. The Prime Minister must have a Hercules aircraft full of audio and video equipment. Let him go to the Province of Alberta and, if he does not have time to go himself, let the video crew go to Alberta, let them go out on the streets and talk to the people who are suffering from a collapsed world oil price. Let the crew talk to the newly unemployed. If the Prime Minister must have a video crew, a crew and an aircraft at a cost of millions, let them go to Newfoundland to the great northern peninsula. Let them talk to the fishermen who are being told that Clause 4 of this Bill will impose additional charges. If he must have an aircraft, two vans, 15 personnel, audio and video equipment at a cost of millions, let him tell the crew to quit chasing around, go to the great Province of British Columbia where the cedar shakes and shingle workers are now unemployed. If we must have that video equipment crew, if they are going to do some good for the Parliament and the people of Canada, let them travel the country and talk to the softwood lumber workers in every province who fear for their jobs.