

Maritime Code

For reasons best known to myself and a few others, I was not in attendance at the committee during its considerations following second reading. For that reason, I come to this debate with no bias of any kind. Not being from either the west coast or the east coast, I suppose I could go along with the passage of this bill. However, in view of the slipshod manner in which the government has handled legislation, with a heavy emphasis on transportation legislation geared for the next session, and in view of the determination of the minister to follow closely the concept of the user shall pay, there should be unanimous agreement to refer the subject matter of Bill C-61 back to the Committee on Transport and Communications. That committee should be empowered to call witnesses so that these many fears can be considered. Perhaps in this way we can have a new maritime code.

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I want, first of all, to associate myself with the remarks of the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) to the extent that he agrees that the amendments proposed by the minister should be referred back to the committee. In the event we have unanimous consent to do so, I believe it important that the committee consider that we do not want the bill locked up in committee until we are faced with another throne speech, resulting in the measure dying on the order paper. Let me assure you that this is one party which wants to see the principle outlined in Bill C-61, which of course is the principle contained in the Darling report, put into law before this session concludes and we begin another with a new throne speech. This legislation has been a long time coming. We are now getting to the point of developing a Canadian coasting trade and a Canadian merchant marine. If we continue to listen to critics all the time, we will never get the bill through.

One can always pick holes in a legislative measure. Let us not kid ourselves about this bill. It will cost money to have a Canadian merchant service. We should not try to have the best of both worlds. Let me state, straightforwardly and honestly, that this party believes the small additional amount of money that might be required, in terms of transportation costs, would be well worth it to provide an additional 40,000 jobs with the creation of a new industry. That is a principle we have not been talking about this afternoon, and I think we should get back to it.

Let me refer to the Darling report and some of its recommendations. Incidentally, those recommendations are largely contained within the provisions of Bill C-61. The main principle is that the Canadian coastal trade should be reserved for Canadian flag vessels. This would result in the employment of an additional 40,000 seamen and a refurbishing of the Canadian shipbuilding industry. This would also ensure Canadian sovereignty in our coastal and Arctic waters. This has become especially important now that we are moving toward a 200-mile economic zone off both our coasts. If we are to be effective in terms of maintaining our jurisdiction in those zones, we must have Canadian presence. We cannot maintain a Canadian presence simply with a few military aircraft; we must have Canadian merchant service ships in the 200-mile zone.

If you support that principle, surely you support the principle of Bill C-61. The other advantage in terms of the Darling report is the development of Arctic and offshore

resources. Here again, the question of Canadian ships with Canadian men, which would certainly involve a price well worth paying in the event there are some additional transportation costs.

● (1600)

I wish to say a word about the coasting trade. The bill has always contained provisions for licensing in terms of the coasting trade. I was much surprised when I picked up the paper not too long ago to find that the Vancouver *Province* had a headline which said that the cruise ship business of British Columbia would be completely on the rocks in the event this bill is passed. I really think the editor of the *Province* has not looked at clause 11 of the bill. I am also wondering whether the members of the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce read the bill, or whether they just listened to Norman Hacking, the editor of the Vancouver *Province*. Perhaps they just had cocktails together and did not look at the bill.

Despite all the publicity surrounding clause 11, there is a provision that licensing can be provided in proper circumstances. I submit that in the bill there is no risk to the coasting trade of British Columbia. What has happened is that this kind of red herring has been floated, and everyone gets excited and loses sight of the principle behind the bill, which is to create a very substantial number of jobs for Canadians in a brand new shipping industry.

I notice that representatives of Burrard Drydock, which is interested in seeing a substantial increase in ship construction in Canada, were absent from the chamber of commerce. It is time we in this country started to act like a country and did things for ourselves, such as provide our own merchant shipping. It is all very well to use foreign bottoms in terms of our coasting trade, and to exploit cheap labour around the world in order to subsidize the multinational interests such as the Greek shipping interests and that small coterie of ship owners around the world who dominate freighter traffic, but we can do something in this country in terms of shipping. If we improve the working conditions in our own vessels so, also, will we improve the working conditions of men in vessels around the world. That, alone, is very important, because in a sense humanity is being exploited around the world because of the conditions which exist in international freighters. Surely, by doing something under Bill C-61, we could make a significant contribution in that way.

I note the complaints about the use of a central registry and the suggestion that the registration facilities be moved to Ottawa. What is being done as a result of the amendment is that, really, we are superimposing one level of bureaucracy over another. This is a difficult sort of Liberal compromise. They looked at the question in terms of the provision of services on the coast and listened to the complaints coming in: rather than discuss the matter with the people who know something about the question of registration, they left the registration in Vancouver and have created another office in Ottawa. The registration was perfectly satisfactory before they started tinkering with it.

I shall not take very long, Mr. Speaker, because our party is substantially in support of the bill. We have some concern, however, about the question of the referral back