

CANADA

House of Commons Debates

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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Speaker: HON. THOMAS SIMPSON SPROULE.

Wednesday, April 29, 1914.

The House met at Three o'clock, the Speaker in the Chair.

CANADA SHIPPING ACT AMENDMENT.

Hon. J. D. HAZEN (Minister of Marine and Fisheries) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 168, to amend part VI of the Canada Shipping Act. He said:

The House will remember that as a result of numerous representations made to me respecting the pilotage matters on the river St. Lawrence, more particularly in the district below the city of Quebec, I recommended to my colleagues in January, 1913, the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire fully into the question. This recommendation was approved and a commission was appointed consisting of Captain Lindsay, wreck commissioner for the department, Mr. Thomas Robb, manager and secretary of the Shipping Federation of Canada, and Captain Adjutor Lachance, president of the Corporation of Pilots for Quebec.

The commission commenced the inquiry at Montreal on February 13, 1913, and a series of sittings were continued in that city and in Quebec. A large number of witnesses were examined and nothing was left undone to make the investigation a thorough and comprehensive one. On the 9th of April of the same year, the commission finished its report and a few days later it was submitted to me. Soon after its receipt it was placed before Parliament by me and in that way the members of the House became aware of the nature of the recommendations made. Before I had an opportunity of fully considering the report, the season of navigation was well under way and consequently it was found inexpedient to put all the recommendations into effect last year. All those, however, that were considered material to efficient

administration and that could be acted upon without obtaining legislation from this Parliament, were put into effect.

One of the chief recommendations made by the commission was for the abolition of the Corporation of Pilots for and below Quebec. The object of the present Bill is to give effect to this recommendation so far as it is considered necessary to do so. The Quebec Corporation of Pilots was created by chapter 123 of the Act of 1860. This Act, together with subsequent amendments, conferred upon the corporation certain powers, among others the power to select and appoint pilots and apprentices, to prescribe the qualifications necessary and generally to control and manage the entire pilotage service for the district. Referring to these powers the commissioners in their report say:

The Minister of Marine and Fisheries, as the pilotage authority, has only such powers as may be left to him by the Corporation of Pilots under its charter, and the statutes in amendment thereof. This, we are convinced, is a very unsatisfactory situation, and the commission is of opinion that the time has now arrived for a change to be made, for the minister to be constituted the only pilotage authority in the district. Evidence has been submitted against any change hinged mainly on the idea that it might be as well to leave things alone, in case the change resulted in a worse condition. Such an idea carried into ordinary everyday life would mean the standing still of business. However necessary the corporation was fifty years ago, it has outlived its usefulness and should give place to a more modern system.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would call the hon. minister's attention to the fact that it is laid down by Bourinot that when a motion is made for leave to introduce a Bill it is permissible to explain it clearly and succinctly, but not to debate it, as it seems to me the hon. gentleman is doing. It seems to me that on one or two occasions before, as well as on this present occasion, the hon. minister has taken the opportunity of dealing with the report of a commission and discussing it in connection with the introduction of a Bill. That