

Canada Shipping Act

We ask the Minister to go further than he has and we tell him that if he is prepared to go further, this legislation will receive speedy approval from the Official Opposition in this House and that this Minister will be applauded. I know he has some difficulty. I know there is some bureaucratic in-fighting and there is some difficulty with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in particular, COGLA, which believes its regulations apply when a rig is operating at sea. However, we are not going to let bureaucratic in-fighting or empire building stand in the way of our responsibility to those citizens who make their living from the sea.

There is another measure contained in this Act which I would like to address. Section 4, charges relating to navigational services, has already been mentioned by the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) and I know by other Hon. Members who have spoken on Bill C-75. You would need to have more nerve than a bad toothache to include that particular section in Bill C-75 at this time. More nerve than a toothache, Mr. Speaker. This is incredible. The Canadian shipping industry at this moment is in deep trouble and on its back. We already have one major company being operated by a bank, and the Minister knows it. We have one or two more which, before this year is out, are liable to join their crippled friend in being operated by a bank or receiver as well. Yet the Minister includes in this legislation a measure to impose on that industry what is, I submit, an unreasonable hardship. This at a time when you have a ship in the Welland Canal looking like the Conservative Party, frozen in suspended animation; unable to move forward, backward or sideways. This at a time when the credibility of the St. Lawrence Seaway is seriously endangered. For two years in a row the system has broken down because preventative maintenance is not being done.

● (1620)

Mr. Mazankowski: Because of Liberal neglect! Why don't you say it?

Mr. Tobin: Because preventative maintenance is not being done because you are trying to balance the books—

Mr. Mazankowski: Boy, have you got a lot of nerve.

Mr. Tobin:—in a way that bites off your nose to spite your face. The Minister knows that if he drives a car year in and year out and does not take it in and do at least the normal maintenance, rotate the tires, check the brakes and change the oil, that car is going to break down. Yet another car, properly maintained, tires rotated, oil changed regularly, will run for a heck of a long time. We were providing good constructive maintenance on the St. Lawrence Seaway when we were in power but this Government is trying to drive the Authority right to the wall. The Authority has a \$30 million surplus. That is not well-known because all you ever hear is that the Authority will have an \$11 million deficit this year. The Government does not know whether it is going to bail the Seaway out. The Government will not let the Authority have

access to the \$30 million it built up in surplus, either to pay off its debt or do preventative maintenance. That is the problem.

The Seaway saves Canadian farmers \$10 per tonne compared to what it would cost to move grain by other methods. It is estimated that in the 26 years the Seaway has been in place, it has saved grain farmers a total of 2 billion. That Seaway is absolutely incredibly important for farmers, iron ore mines, those who are left, not having been shut down during the tenure of the current Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). It is important to people at Stelco producing steel. Yet this Government treats it as if it were an old bus. It has aged a little bit and it is letting it run itself into the ground. This is the exact same approach being taken with the Newfoundland Railway. The Government does not have the political courage to say that it wants to scrap the railway in Newfoundland so it is taking away maintenance dollars and letting it run itself into the ground. Eventually it will tell Newfoundlanders that it is run down, no good and let's close it down. Well, if the Government is not careful that is exactly the kind of situation we will find on the St. Lawrence Seaway. I know my friend from the NDP has raised this matter a number of times during the last few weeks and he is absolutely correct. The Government is being penny-wise and pound-foolish.

I simply want to say again to the Minister, having spent \$15 million over a couple of years in order to come up with the most intensive and exhaustive examination of conditions affecting the operation of rigs in the offshore, having made specific recommendations to the Minister, and despite the bureaucratic difficulties he has, despite the in-fighting which may occur among bureaucrats because the Minister is certainly not a man who would be distracted from doing the right thing because of bureaucratic in-fighting, would he not please reconsider and stand in his place and provide us with amendments which would reflect the spirit of the recommendations made by the royal commission on the *Ocean Ranger* marine disaster? Will he not do that? If he does, I can assure him that we in the Liberal Party, and I would not be surprised if the same applies to the other Party represented in this House, will do everything in our power to see that this Bill receives the speedy passage it deserves. That is always providing that we have made up our minds here that Canada should use all her technology and whatever of her wealth is necessary to give those people at sea in hazardous conditions every possible chance at survival.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, as someone who has a son on one of those rigs, I assure the Hon. Member that he does not have a corner on concern for these people. It is shared by all of us from our part of the country. I want to direct my comments, because the Hon. Member's observations are important, to advise the House of where we stand, in part, on the recommendations of Mr. Justice Hickman. As has been indicated, the first phase of the report was tabled in August of 1984 and it contained 66 recommendations directed at Government and industry. They dealt with drilling rig design, evacuation systems, certification and training of crew, search and rescue, among others. Some 80 per cent of those recommendations are