

Canada Shipping Act

owners and shipping companies. For example, the St. Lawrence Shipowners Association objected to cost recovery. Representatives of that association are quoted as saying the following in committee:

—we do not agree that we should give the government a blank cheque, which would allow it to set up a fee system about which we know nothing at the present time.

The Dominion Marine Association said the following:

—this could amount to an additional \$1.65 per tonne for every tonne that moved through the Seaway last year. Given the fact that traffic was down 20 per cent from 1984, this cost could have a dramatic impact on future traffic patterns.

The Prince Edward Island Potato Marketing Board also objected to the clause. That was one of the reasons given for the fall of the Conservative Government in Prince Edward Island. It is Clause 4, this plot by the federal Conservative Government to implement user fees, that will adversely affect Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Angus: They got the message.

Mr. Rodriguez: The message was delivered to them. The Conservatives only got 11 seats in the whole province.

The Prince Edward Island Potato Marketing Board had this to say about the clause:

All of the moneys expended for upgrading this shipping port (Summerside) over the years will be lost if dredging costs are passed on to the user because there just will not be any shipping.

Finally, the former Minister of Fisheries of the Province of Prince Edward Island, a Tory, said the following:

Fishermen, through the Fisheries Act pay for right of access to the common property resource which they harvest through personal and vessel licence fees. It is my view that it is the responsibility of the licensing authority, namely, the Government of Canada, to provide access to the resources for which fishermen are licensed.

He said that before his defeat and the Conservatives got the message. They were defeated.

I say to Conservative Hon. Members who represent Atlantic Canada that now is the time to repent. Now is the time to do it. If they do not back off on Clause 4, they will all go down the tubes at the next federal election. Let this be a message to them.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to these motions in order to ask for common sense in the deliberation of Bills that are supposed to be in the best interests of all the citizens of Canada, and, in particular, in this case, the citizens who live in the Province of Quebec where the Great St. Lawrence Seaway is found. That Seaway is a very vital link to the lives and the economy of our province. I think it would be irresponsible, to say the least, and even unfair to increase the costs to fishermen in this way.

As we all know, the fishing industry is a depressed industry at this time. Fishermen have asked for a degree of relief. There have been some serious problems in that industry. I would suggest that we are making a very reasonable request. We are asking for a delay. Rather than simply opposing for the sake of

opposing, we are recommending a delay so that we can study from an intelligent perspective the potential negative impact of Clause 4 of Bill C-75.

I think that the Minister would be most disconcerted if we were to allow this Bill to go ahead. I think we are saving him a great deal of heartache. The Minister of Employment and Immigration would have been quite thrilled if we had asked for a delay until the report of the Forget Commission came in. If we had, she would not have found herself so embarrassed today with respect to the reaction to unemployment insurance benefits and severance pay.

In a sense, Clause 4 gives the Minister the authority to charge but does not tell people what they are being charged for. It gives the Minister the authority to determine what he is going to do with the lives of people without letting those people know what he is going to do with their lives. How will that impact on the quality of their lives? I would like to recommend that we take cognizance of the growing discomfort of many groups in society and give heed to what they have to say.

The Government prides itself on having developed a very good rapport with our good neighbour to the South and has been negotiating for an open ear and an open mind. If this is to be the case, I would strongly recommend that the Government listen to our American friends and neighbours and that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) take heed of a letter he received on April 14 so that American-Canadian relations may improve all along the way. The Seaway does not belong only to Canada; it is a shared waterway. What we do here has an impact upon the American side of the border.

• (1140)

I should like to refer to a letter signed by a number of American Senators and dated April 14, 1986. It was directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister from the Executive Director of the Great Lakes Commission. It reads:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The Great Lakes Commission is deeply concerned about proposed Bill C-75, which would authorize the imposition of cost recovery for Canadian Coast Guard services.

The Commission respects Canada's need to raise additional revenues. The Commission also accepts Canada's choice of user fees as one vehicle to accomplish that end. However, the Commission, as the only co-ordinating and advocacy agency established by the States and approved by Congress to provide a collective voice for the eight Great Lakes states on water resource and related issues, would be remiss if it did not express opposition to the current language of Bill C-75.

The Commission has monitored the progress of C-75 in Parliament and participated in regional discussions about potential impacts of the Coast Guard cost recovery provision, Clause 4. Commission testimony was presented to the legislative committee in Ottawa on February 13, 1986.

It is too bad it was not listened to. The letter continues:

The Commission emphasized four points believed to be necessary before navigation cost recovery legislation can be successfully implemented:

This is one of the reasons we are asking for the delay. It continues: