

*Government Orders*

government will be to create a more viable and prosperous shipbuilding industry”.

That was the promise of 1984. The reality of 1992 in so far as Marystown is concerned, and it is fairly indicative of what has happened in yards throughout the country, is there is no longer 500 to 600 workers there. There are now under 100 workers.

The skills are being lost. People are being forced to move out of the area, to go elsewhere to find some gainful employment. If we are not very careful we are going to lose an entire industry because the skills will be lost forever. The promise of 1984 by that party which is now the government was not followed through.

Here is what it did instead. Instead of taking initiatives to ensure, in its words, a viable and prosperous shipbuilding industry, the government proceeded to do the opposite. It dismantled the few shipbuilding initiatives that were in place. It dismantled, for example, the shipbuilding industry assistance program which had served the industry extremely well, stabilized operations, preserved jobs all over this country including at Marystown.

• (1250)

Second, this government dismantled, phased out, the productivity improvement grants which, together with the other program I mentioned, the shipbuilding industry assistance program, had gone a long way to helping that industry survive difficult times in providing over-all aid to that industry. This government, barely in office in its first fiscal year, took steps in contravention of its direct promise to set about creating a viable, prosperous industry. In contradiction of that, it proceeded within its first fiscal year in office to dismantle those two programs, the only two remaining programs at the time targeted toward assisting the shipbuilding industry.

This government began to phase them out as of March 31, 1985. It is true for the record that some of the residual funds were used after that date. The last were used in the period ending March 31, 1991. However, no new funding was applied. A direct decision of cabinet was taken to cut off any new funding for those programs as of March 31, 1985—not a year after this government had taken office.

We here could get a lot more excited about this particular bill if it had not failed to grasp the very clear opportunity that was before it, an opportunity to give the

Canadian shipbuilding industry at Marystown and all over this country a much needed shot in the arm. It is not a matter of general rhetoric. It can be a matter of specifics. If this government wants specific suggestions as to what can be done to revitalize that industry, while still honouring the spirit of this piece of legislation and at the same time keeping its commitment to the people of Canada in 1984, there is no shortage of them.

For a start, it could eliminate all the tariff exemptions on vessels entering this country, giving shipbuilders in this country a break, instead of spending our time giving foreign yards such a break. If it wants another idea, I say to the government from now on see to it that no fishing vessels be issued licenses to fish in Canadian waters unless they are built here in this country.

One of our great industries, the fishing industry, ought to be given the wherewithal to support its colleagues in the shipbuilding industry, its fellow workers in that other great industry.

If the government wants a third suggestion, what about the idea of concessionary financing? The government should make that available to ship owners and purchasers who are constructing their vessels here in this country.

Why does the federal government not go back to the idea of providing financial assistance to shipyards requiring upgrading and refurbishing? These are just four ideas. There are many more that I am sure the parliamentary secretary is familiar with.

A fifth is that all goods moved between domestic ports ought to be carried in Canadian built, Canadian crewed and Canadian flagged ships. These are not such revolutionary ideas. They are ideas that have been on the carpet for a long time. The government skates over them. The government ignores them, ignores the plea of the industry.

The Alliance of Shipbuilding Unions put those ideas to the government three or four years ago, the ideas that I have mentioned and many others besides them.

I make a plea. I know it is the third reading of the bill. I make a plea to the government to come to its senses on this one. Sure, preserve the objective in this bill. We support that objective, but give it some teeth. Give it some meaning. Give the workers in Marystown some hope. Give the people in the shipbuilding industry across this country some reason to believe that this government puts its money where its mouth is; that when it said in