

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*SHIPPING—CHANGE IN REGISTRATION OF
"CAPE BRETON MINER"

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I posed the following question in the house:

Is the minister aware that Upper Lakes Shipping Limited is presently making application to change to foreign registry the registry of the vessel *Cape Breton Miner*, construction of which was subsidized by the Canadian taxpayer? Further, is the minister in a position to advise whether this change can be prevented in order to save the jobs of 39 Canadians who will be replaced by cheap labour—

I was referring to jobs lost to members of the Canadian merchant navy. At that time I said the question could be directed either to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) or the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey), as I felt they were both involved. The Minister of Transport was absent on other business, so I thought the Minister of Labour would answer the question. Mr. Speaker agreed with me that there was a sense of urgency in the question and felt it should be dealt with in our proceedings at this time.

In 1967, according to volume II of the Public Accounts, Upper Lakes Shipping entered into an agreement for a government subsidy of more than \$2,200,000 in shipbuilding contracts through the federal government. The whole question of transfer of registry from Canadian to foreign ownership should, I believe, be opened up; it is a matter upon which the government should make an inquiry and take a decision.

It is a scandal when ships paid for by Canadian taxpayers and constructed through government subsidies are allowed to fly a foreign flag in order to avoid hiring Canadian seamen. This is simply a device to avoid paying decent wages in line with Canadian standards. It is surprising that the union, the S.I.U., has not seen fit to protest.

The transfer of Canadian shipping to Panamanian and Liberian or other foreign registries has in recent years become a public disgrace. It is apparently being done with government connivance and approval. Not only does the government wink at what is going on, but apparently it gives full approval to the progressive destruction of the Canadian shipping industry. This is seen in the fact that in spite of such foreign registry, the companies and ships involved continue to receive from this government treatment reserved for domestic shipping.

They cannot have it both ways. If they are registered as Liberian or Panamanian vessels

[Mr. Jamieson.]

with foreign crews, they should be treated as such by the laws of this country and should be compelled to meet all requirements and conditions pertaining to foreign shipping. In fact, they are not so required and continue to enjoy all the privileges of Canadian shipping; for example, free and unrestricted access to Canadian ports, and apparently free access to subsidies. Canadians are becoming fed up with the abuse of registry implied in these activities.

I ask the minister or whoever is going to reply for him—I believe the house is entitled to an answer—how many such transfers have taken place in the last 18 months? I think we should have this information, and I hope it will be forthcoming in order to throw light on a situation which is causing great concern among seamen generally. The transfer of registry as a device to avoid paying Canadian wages, while at the same time accepting Canadian subsidies and being granted all the privileges of Canadian registry, should not be tolerated one moment longer. I hope that the minister or his parliamentary secretary will be able to deal with these points, because I can assure the minister that I do not intend to let the matter drop here.

I should like to read into the record a wire I have received from the mayor and members of the North Sydney Town Council. It reads as follows:

We advise the vessel "Cape Breton Miner" owned by Upper Lakes Shipping Co. will shortly be changed from Canadian registry to foreign registry (Liberia). Understand Canadian crew will be displaced following this change.

• (10:10 p.m.)

Strongly deplore situation which allows this to happen to vessels built with contribution from Canadian taxpayers. Urge legislation be amended to require such vessels remain under Canadian registry for all time.

I should like to mention also that the North Sydney Longshoremen's Union, Local 1259 I.L.A. sent a letter to the Prime Minister which reads as follows:

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

We, the executive, and members of Local 1259 I.L.A. wish to protest the change in registry of the ship "Cape Breton Miner" from Canadian registry to Liberian and also change of crew from Canadian to Chinese. We understand it was the Canadian taxpayers' dollars that helped finance the building of this ship, and also the taxpayers' money that paid the subsidy to transport coal from Cape Breton to Ontario markets.