

Canada Shipping Act

here for but a few minutes, I have not quite settled in and got on track. I thank him for his assistance in helping me to get back on track.

The Hon. Member mentioned something that is terribly relevant to this debate today, Transport 2000, which is a non-governmental and non-political body. It does not carry any political stripes. It is an organization which has always provided the country with objective and useful commentary on government transportation policy. For the first time in many years it is being told by the Government that the funding which it received at arm's length with no strings attached is now being cut off. Some \$48,000 was provided last year.

● (1630)

I suppose the objective and non-partisan assessment of Transport 2000 was not preaching the message according to the criteria that exists with respect to producing slick publications in Washington and making home movies for the Prime Minister. Transport 2000 has been told that because of its objective and honest critique of the Government's transport policy, the \$48,000 grant which it has received for so many years is to be cut off next year. The Government is not interested in hearing non-partisan and objective comment on transport policy, and I find that to be tragic.

Indeed, I find it to be insufferable that the mere \$48,000 which was providing such a benefit to all Canadians and an occasional sober slap to the Government is being cut off at a time when the Prime Minister and his entourage are spending \$50,000 and \$100,000 per day living like blue-eyed sheikhs in the cities of Paris, New York and Washington. I find it shocking that Transport 2000 should have its \$48,000 yearly grant removed at a time when the Government is spending more than \$50,000 per day to have a Hercules aircraft loaded up with two van loads of video equipment and technicians who chase the Prime Minister around the world making home video movies.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians are not interested in a northern version of *Bedtime for Bonzo* nor in *The Life of Brian* as represented by the flights of fancy on which the Prime Minister takes himself during foreign travel. They are interested in objective comment and the expertise Transport 2000 has provided to the consumers of Canada for so many years, something which is now in doubt because the Government has decided that this organization is not toeing the line well enough. I think that is tragic.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would the Hon. Member permit a question?

Mr. Tobin: Sure.

Mr. Benjamin: I appreciate his response regarding the matter of the grants for Transport 2000. Does the Hon. Member know that the office of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) retained Transport 2000 to do some work and has owed it \$138.85 for the past year and a half? The

Government has not only cut off its grant but it will not pay the bill. I would appreciate it if the hon. gentleman would expound on that for a moment.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member had an intervention to make. I appreciate again that it is not a point of order and I will not recognize it.

Mr. Benjamin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is appropriate on a point of order to ask a person who has the floor if he would permit a question. The hon. gentleman said he would, I asked him the question, what else do you need?

Mr. Speaker: You need a ruling of the House that allows that to be done.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, it is tragic enough to discover that the grant for this neutral organization has been cut off, but it is even more difficult to comprehend that this Bill has been outstanding for over a year. I thank the Hon. Member for bringing this matter to the attention of the House and indeed to the attention of the Minister. Apparently his Parliamentary Secretary is taking a break or is answering the phone. Perhaps as a result of the Hon. Member's intervention, this small injustice might be resolved as we attempt to bring to the attention of Canadians this larger injustice represented by Bill C-75, Clause 4.

When the Government brought this Bill before the House for third reading some two weeks ago, the Parliamentary Secretary indicated to Members of Parliament that a number of major shipping organizations in Canada endorsed the Government's initiative in Clause 4. He said that the Great Lakes Waterways Development Association was supportive of Clause 4. What do you think happened, Mr. Speaker? The next day, lo and behold, every single Member of Parliament and Senator received a telex from the Great Lakes Waterways Development Association. One might have expected that the telex would have said that the association endorsed the words of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Forrestall). Surprise of surprises, that is not what the telex said. The telex begins with the word "contrary". Do you know what that word means, Mr. Speaker? It means counter, contrary, the opposite of, counter to and contrary. The telex read: "Contrary to the impression possibly left by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, the Great Lakes Waterways Development Association does not now nor ever has supported Clause 4 of Bill C-75. Bill C-75 should be amended to delete Clause 4 at this time."

I think it is extremely important that the record be set straight because we would not want the House to inadvertently or accidentally get the impression that anyone in Canada is warped enough or misinformed enough to endorse Clause 4 of Bill C-75.

More to the point, during the course of his remarks, the Parliamentary Secretary left the impression that Canada Steamship Lines supported the Bill. He left the impression that that company, a major Canadian company, supported the