

Vessel Construction Act

bill he could write off 33½ per cent each year, if he so desired, so that in three years he would wipe out his entire cost. Perhaps when the minister replies he will say whether this 33½ per cent may be carried over from one year to another, and perhaps broken down. Would it be possible for a shipowner to write off 10 per cent one year and 23½ per cent the following year, depending upon the balance sheet or the profit and loss statement for that twelve-month period? And if that is possible, over what period of years would a shipowner be permitted to carry on this practice? Perhaps the minister would be good enough to enlarge upon that when he deals with this matter of depreciation.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without saying that I feel this is a very generous offer. Some may wonder why such a generous offer should be made, and whether it is too generous, whether it will permit a ship to be written off in three years. A person might feel that he would like to invest a million dollars in a ship, but would hesitate to do so because after three years he would have no further opportunity to write off what he might have left. Of course any person who feels there is a profitable future in the shipping trade and invests a million dollars in a ship must think it is worth while when he is offered a depreciation of 33½ per cent instead of the usual 6 per cent. I know a good many people would like to have such an opportunity with regard to alterations, new fixtures and so on in their stores. Perhaps the Minister of National Revenue would take an example from the Minister of Transport and permit us the same depreciation in future.

I said I was going to be brief, Mr. Chairman, and I think I have kept my word in making these one or two points. In closing I should like to compliment the minister on having brought forward this bill as the first measure of assistance to an industry which badly needs help these days.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Did I understand the hon. member at one point to be asking whether it would be possible to have what I suppose one might call a retarded depreciation rather than an accelerated depreciation? Was that what he was asking?

Mr. Isnor: I did put a question somewhat along that line. I asked whether instead of taking the 33½ per cent in one twelve-month period a shipowner could take 10 per cent in that period and carry over the remaining 23½ per cent to another twelve-month period.

Mr. MacInnis: The senior member for Halifax concluded his speech by congratulating the minister on bringing forward this

measure. I am sorry I cannot begin my few words by doing the same. In saying that, I may be misunderstood. It may be understood that I am opposed to this measure, but really I do not know enough about it either to oppose or to support it. I believe very few members in this house can say whether we are justified in subsidizing the shipbuilding industry under present conditions.

I come from a seaport, as does the member for Vancouver-Quadra, where the people are interested in shipbuilding, the sailing of ships, and the work and wealth which a seaport brings to a country. I shall, however, have something more to say on that point. I should like to have the minister reconcile some facts which I believe I can put before him with the proposal to encourage shipbuilding. But, Mr. Chairman, in order to prepare you, in case you are thinking of raising a point of order on me, may I say that we allowed this bill to go into committee without debate. In such circumstances the understanding always is that the debate which would have taken place on second reading can take place in the committee. Since we are discussing a bill to encourage the construction and conversion of vessels in Canada, I believe that everything pertinent to the construction and conversion of vessels in Canada, not only the building of them but the purposes for which they are built and the possibility of finding business for those vessels, is germane to the question under debate.

The government should not put the private members of this house in the position in which they have put them by bringing this measure before us. Unless we approve of the bill, we may be accused of obstructing the building of ships; then, if we do approve of the bill, we may be doing that which is not in the interests of Canada. As has been pointed out, we have the annual report of the Canadian Maritime Commission before us. It was tabled, if I recall correctly, after the estimates of the transport department dealing with the maritime commission had been discussed and carried. Consequently, there was no opportunity of discussing this report. It seems to me it is of sufficient importance that it should be sent either to the standing committee on marine and fisheries, or to a special committee of this house for study and report.

It is really nothing less than an imposition on this house to have a bill of such importance as this presented to it in the dying hours of the session. Let us keep in mind the title of the bill, "An act to encourage the construction and conversion of vessels in Canada". I have two press clippings in my hand, both of which are from the *Montreal Gazette*. One of