

The Address—Mr. Applewhaite

it is impossible to overemphasize the importance of providing on the Pacific coast—I cannot speak for the other one—an adequate coastguard service. I use the word “coastguard” for want of a better one, because I think the service provided by the United States coastguard is just about what our people want. I am not going to try to tell this government or the officers of the department exactly what that service should consist of. That is a job for the specialists and the experts. But as this move started, so far as I am aware, about seven years ago in Prince Rupert, and as it has certainly received the backing of practically every major organization within my riding within two hundred miles of the coast I feel that I must—and I gladly do it—add my word of support to it.

Proceeding logically from the question of a coastguard service, next comes the question of radio as it affects ships and ship-to-shore communication. I notice that the speech from the throne tells us that the Canada Shipping Act is to be reopened in conjunction with the international convention for the safety of life at sea. I am no expert in reading international conventions; and while I have spent hours with the international convention for the safety of life at sea, I still have some doubts as to what it covers in certain districts and as to certain tonnages. I therefore want to make this suggestion most strongly to the government in conjunction with but not dependent upon a coastguard service. That is, that the Canada Shipping Act or other appropriate legislation should provide that every ship of, shall we say, fifty tons or more, and every ship chartered for the carrying of passengers, should carry at least one full-time radio operator who shall have no other duties but the maintenance of radio equipment and the keeping of radio watches.

The answer which is likely to be made is this: “On your coast practically every ship of any size carries a radio operator who is also perhaps assistant purser or freight clerk or something of that sort; but what does that matter, because if the ship gets into difficulties he can easily go up to his little shack and send out his message?” But that is only half the situation, Mr. Speaker. That makes it fine for that ship itself if it strikes a rock, but it makes that ship absolutely useless to give any help to another vessel twenty-five or thirty-five miles away, and out of sight, if the first ship has not a radio operator keeping watch. What is the use of a radio operator on the ship which is being wrecked dashing up to his cabin and sending off SOS’s if no other radio operator is going to be in his shack until he too has an SOS or a message to send? I grant that is a *reductio*

ad absurdum but it is not so *ad absurdum* as it sounds because that is how the thing will work out in practice.

I do not want to waste words by repeating myself, but I urge that, when the Canada Shipping Act is being opened this year, we make absolutely certain that no vessel of, say, fifty tons or more and no vessel carrying passengers for hire be allowed to sail without a full-time radio operator—and I mean “full-time”, not having other duties as well.

The speech from the throne announced a long-desired decision in the matter of veterans’ affairs. At last the imperial is to receive the war veterans’ allowance. The only criticism one can possibly make of that proposal is that we should like to have seen it sooner. At the same time, we cannot expect to have everything at once; neither can we expect to have everything as soon as we ask for it. I wish to commend the department and the minister most strongly for their decision at last to bring the war veterans’ allowance to the imperial. This means that the War Veterans Allowance Act is going to be reopened; and I do not doubt that every minister in this government knows that the minute you open an act for one purpose, you are going to have some other requests. Hence they will not be surprised if we mention another matter in connection with the war veterans’ allowance. Let me make this matter clear, Mr. Speaker. I know, and this country knows, that this government has given the veteran in Canada generous and more than generous treatment. Of that there can be no criticism. All one has to do is to compare it with any other country in the world. Unfortunately it always happens that some injustices may creep in, and some unforeseen difficulties may arise. As I understand, the veterans’ allowance act—in fact I know what I am talking about because I was for fourteen years secretary of a Legion branch—was brought in primarily on the basis that a veteran who had served in a theatre of war during world war I was prematurely aged, and therefore the war veterans’ allowance was given to him at age 65, whereas he would have to wait until age 70 to get the old age pension. Assuming that that is so—and it is so—we find a most unfortunate situation. We find that in certain generous provinces, such as British Columbia, the old age pensioner finds that he can draw, assuming he is single, \$50 a month. I grant you that that does not all come from the dominion, whereas the war veterans’ allowance does. I know that when that situation was brought to the attention of the departmental officials a year or so ago a subsidiary allowance arrangement