

Canada Shipping Act

When studying that portion of the bill dealing with the pollution control officer, I could not understand how that office was set up. I assume this officer would be someone from the Public Service who would have other duties in other departments. On checking with the minister, he advised me this is so. This officer could be a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police stationed in an outpost if there are no other officials available. Whoever he is, and whoever these other functionaries mentioned in the legislation may be, I hope they will not find themselves in the position of a friend of mine from Beaver Harbour, Nova Scotia, a Mr. Leask, who was appointed a receiver of wrecks some seven or eight years ago. Lo and behold, there was a wreck in part of the ocean within his jurisdiction. But the receiver of wrecks is paid by the company concerned, and in this case, having seen its assets become a wreck, the company had no further interest. In addition, it was a United States company with no assets in Canada on which to levy. I entered for a while into the spirit of the merry-go-round between Mr. Leask, the Department of Transport and the marine lawyer in Halifax representing the United States company, but in the end Mr. Leask never received his payment as receiver of wrecks, and I intend to show up humbly before the environmental committee when this bill goes before it in an effort to see that nobody else finds himself in the position of Mr. Leask.

● (4:50 p.m.)

Finally, there has been some discussion as to whether this bill should be sent to the committee on environmental pollution or to another committee. I think there is much to be said for the contention that it should go to the Transport Committee. Surely, though, we could send it to the committee already designated and then, if we find, after some discussion there, that it ought to be handled by the larger committee, it could be transferred.

I am very much in agreement with those who have said that ships other than oil tankers may be carrying pollutants. I received a blistering letter lately from somebody who had travelled aboard one of the Canadian National ferries operating out of Nova Scotia this year and who had been horrified by the dumping of garbage all over the Atlantic Ocean. I make these remarks in the spirit which very much prevails this afternoon when we are all trying to do something about this serious pollution problem. I was prompted to take part in the debate, as were many other members, by the *Arrow* disaster, and I might point out that the first real debate on this subject took place when I brought the subject up on the adjournment motion late one evening and said that at least Canadian pilots, familiar with these waters, should be carried in these circumstances and also that rules should be laid down setting out navigation routes to be followed by vessels carrying potentially dangerous cargoes. I am glad to find that the bulk of these points, as well as others, are covered in the legislation before us, and for this reason I support the bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must advise the House that if the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

[Mr. McCleave.]

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): May I first of all thank all hon. members who have spoken in this debate for their support of the principles of this bill, and thank them also for their worthwhile, and, for the most part, well thought out suggestions for the improvement of the measure. I wish to assure the House that if there is any suggestion from any quarter which it is possible to implement and which is within our competence as a Parliament and as a government, we shall be most pleased to do so.

I have taken note of all the comments which have been made during the debate but hon. members will appreciate that with the relatively short time at my disposal it would be impossible to deal with them all. I should like, nevertheless, to deal with one or two of them. In the first instance, with regard to the more or less general feeling that the bill does not go far enough, let me say that in ideal terms perhaps various parts of the measure should be extended. But I believe hon. members have also given their own, and the correct, answer to this charge by pointing out that we have in fact gone further unilaterally in this particular area than any other country on the face of the earth.

What we have done has been to stretch our jurisdiction to the absolute maximum. When we get into committee I shall be pleased to answer detailed questions on this issue and I hope to persuade members that the position is exactly as I have stated.

Reference has been made to the fact that below latitude 60 we have not gone as far as we did in connection with the Arctic pollution measure. Again, I believe the hon. member who made this point himself recognized the reasons behind this approach. There are unique circumstances in the north which do not apply further south. Moreover it is our judgment that we do not need the same powers in the area below latitude 60 as we do in the Arctic. If we were to extend the so-called pollution zones 100 miles to sea off, for example, the east coast, it would be tremendously difficult for us to try to investigate which vessels, among the enormous amount of shipping in that region, were heading for Canadian ports. But I hope to deal with this aspect of the matter also in the committee and if it can be demonstrated there that we could strengthen these provisions in some way I shall show no reluctance about doing so.

I wish to refer now, to the comments made by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) and to thank him for his kind comments. He outlined the position correctly; there is a gap in our fishing zones on the south coast of Newfoundland, but, again, I do not believe it amounts to so great an inhibition as the hon. member believes it to be in terms of this measure. For example, the whole of Placentia Bay can, and does, come within the so-called pollution control zone. So while there is, in some respects, the gap to which he alluded, there are more teeth in this legislation even in these difficult areas than has been appreciated to date.

Finally, I should like to suggest that if hon. members are so disposed we might give second reading to this bill