

ics, ships assisting ships in distress in Canadian waters, ships engaged in salvage operations, American ships performing certain operations, et cetera, et cetera.

We could not in conscience be against this bill because the objective is absolutely right. We are not against the bill or against the principle of the bill. A great opportunity has been missed here, an opportunity to revitalize a shipbuilding industry in this country, an industry that is clearly on its knees.

There seems to be a mad, insane rush by this government to embrace everything that is American. Every day the Prime Minister and his ministers stand here and spend a good part of their time defending themselves on their actions in cosying up to the Americans or trying to justify things that the American administration is doing.

In an area where they could take a page of the American's book, i.e. the Jones Act, either by embracing some of the measures in that legislation or by taking initiatives to have the effect of that legislation mitigated in so far as Canadian ships are concerned, the irony is that it is the one area in which the government refuses to act. It is the one area it is walking away from the possibility of doing something that would rebound to the benefit of Canadian shipbuilding and the workers in the Canadian shipbuilding industry.

We cannot really have a fair, balanced debate on this important issue of coastal trade in Canada without putting on the record this government's flip-flop on the whole issue of Canadian shipbuilding policy. We always have to back off whenever we are dealing with legislation in this House and ask ourselves why are we passing another law? Laws for the sake of laws are wasted time. Every law that is legislated in this Chamber ought to have some positive purpose. We have always as legislators to ask the question before we proceed to legislate, why this bill? Why do we do this now? Why do we need another law? Why do we need to regulate something else?

In the case of the present legislation there is no point at all in having new provisions, new parameters on coastal trade unless it serves some positive purpose for Canadians, the people who send us here in the first place. That is who we represent. That is who we ought to be running the laws on behalf of.

Government Orders

Members have to back off and see in perspective Bill C-33 and say yes it is a good thing, all parties agree, it is going to be an improvement over what was. We also have to back off and ask the second question, how in particular will it benefit certain groups of people in the industry?

It is clear from the arguments from the government side it will benefit the ship owners. Indeed, it looks after them pretty well thank you very much. I am not surprised about that. This government has always looked after people who are fairly well off financially. It has always looked after the captains of industry, its corporate bosses, so I am not surprised ship owners will benefit from this by having all the freedom in the world to go wherever they want to get whatever boats they want at any time.

The fine print defies the objective of this bill. The objective is to Canadianize the operation. The fine print allows enough loopholes to drive trucks through. The exceptions are so many that the good objective of this legislation is largely lost sight of. The question remains, who will benefit from this legislation? I can tell hon. members that some people who will not benefit very much from this legislation and that is the workers in the shipbuilding industry.

I was grateful to my friend for Ottawa South who made some very kind references to the shipbuilding facility in my riding at Marystown. He and I had the opportunity, as he indicated, to be there together just a month or two ago. I can tell him in your presence, sir, his visit was much appreciated and the workers and the union there have indicated to me since they were rather impressed with his interest in getting his head around the issue and indeed his grasp of the issues that are involved in this industry which is very much in crisis at this particular time.

The workers at Marystown, the few that are left, under 100 now, maybe 75 workers in that yard today, where there used to be up to 600 workers will not particularly benefit from this legislation because a golden opportunity has been missed here to revitalize the shipbuilding industry. Not a lot of time is left.

This government when it was seeking to be the government back in the election of 1984 had some pretty brave words. Here is what the government in waiting said in 1984: "A top priority of a Progressive Conservative