

St. Lawrence Pilots Work Stoppage

the Montreal and Cornwall pilots. I notice that my hon. friend from Stormont (Mr. Campbell) is not in his seat—

Mr. Johnson: Neither are you in your seat, I mean in Laurier.

Mr. Chevrier:—because, when the question of pilots was raised last year, the hon. member for Stormont stated that there were none in his constituency. Yet, Mr. Speaker—

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: Order. I seem to hear more voices than one. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I think not.

(Translation):

Mr. Chevrier: However, Mr. Speaker, the cost of pilotage in that district decreased by 300 per cent, if we take into account the increase in tonnage, and those figures bear no resemblance whatsoever to those given by the minister.

Now, according to the minister, an increase of 16 per cent is sought by the pilots travelling between Montreal and Quebec. And—I am not sure whether the minister mentioned it in the statement he just made—I understand the pilots pledged the minister their word that they would sign an agreement for a period of three years, under the provision that the tariffs be increased, and they have agreed to give full consideration to the whole issue of pilotage during that period of three years.

I need not tell the house, Mr. Speaker, that the course followed for the settlement of this dispute is completely outmoded.

I appreciate that the minister is subject to the clauses of the Canada Shipping Act and that, as the authority over pilotage, he must comply with the law. But this dispute should be settled in the same way as all others.

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: Order. The discussion is rather unusual. The subject is complicated, it is true, and the hon. member for Laurier is discussing it in considerable detail and going somewhat beyond the statement made by the minister. I have not interfered, but I feel that the hon. member should keep his comments within as narrow a compass as he reasonably can, and that he should also be prepared to agree, with respect to the new matter he has raised, that the minister, if he wishes to do so, is free to comment on that matter.

(Translation):

Mr. Chevrier: I shall try to abide by your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but it should not be forgotten that the minister made a long statement, obviously prepared by his officials and dealing with the circumstances of the interview he had with the pilots.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Under the circumstances it should not be forgotten that the opposition has the right to reply to certain allegations made by the minister. He said, for instance, that the pilots had only given 24-hour notice before holding their meetings, which is incorrect, for the pilots have been requesting since last February to meet with the officials of the transport department and to have an interview with the minister himself, because they were unable to come to an agreement with the shipowners.

Now, in short, Mr. Speaker, the minister was arrogant with the pilots yesterday. He—

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member's comment goes beyond the ordinary comment that is permissible on ministerial statements, and I would ask him not to make a debate of this matter. It is true that the circumstances recounted by the minister in his statement constituted a narrative of some length and complication, and that if one commented on everything he said it might take considerable time, but that does not make this an opportunity for a debate. I would ask the hon. member for Laurier, who has had very full time, in fact more time than the minister himself took, to bring his remarks to a close.

(Translation):

Mr. Balcer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: Order. Perhaps the minister would indicate why he is rising.

(Translation):

Mr. Balcer: I rise on a point of order. I do not object to my hon. friend commenting on my statement and explaining in this house the opposition's stand concerning pilotage. But when he states that this or that statement is false and that I showed arrogance etc., I submit that it has nothing to do with the statement I just made, and I feel that the hon. member for Laurier is out of order.

He can comment upon my statement; but he has raised three or four points which are absolutely false, or at least do not give a true picture of what has happened.

However, I should like to have the privilege of answering him so that the house may not be left under a false impression and faced with certain allegations which are not borne out by the facts.

(Text):

Mr. Speaker: I accept the minister's view. As a matter of fact I had risen to indicate to the hon. member for Laurier that I too