

Business of the House

the Government has tried to slip something important and fundamental through Parliament. It strikes me as being strange and perhaps somewhat devious that the Government would bring in this Bill in the last few hours of the last day in the last week of the last month of this Parliament, which has been in session for the better part of two years.

● (1520)

The Government has come with this Bill in the expectation that Members, with visions of summer holidays dancing in their heads, with visions of ties and suits flung in the closets, with visions of summer gear and being down on the trail with constituents, with visions of seeing their wives and families—and husbands in the case of our female colleagues—would cave in and allow this legislation to slip through so that we could more quickly pursue our own personal vacations and agendas.

I am one of those who would rather be on the way back home today. I am one of those who would like to be heading home to see my friends and my family, my children and my good wife who puts up with my absences, but I will not on principle allow this Bill to be slipped through at the last second with all the concurrent negative impacts on so many people in Canada just because the Government is counting on an opposition to be tired and so allow, in the pursuit of our own pleasures, this Bill to slip through today. No, Mr. Speaker, that will not happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, 15 days ago I started my speech. Two days later, in the middle of it, the Government actually changed the order of business and buried this Bill. It is like a skeleton in the family closet. You try to bury it deep in the corner where no one will see or notice it, and then you slip it back out at the last second, expose it briefly to the light of day, and then whack it back into the closet again. That is what the Government has attempted to do with this Bill. It is bringing it forward in the dying minutes to have it slip through. I will not allow that to happen as long as my voice stands up.

The Thunder Bay Economic Development Corporation in its brief presented yesterday went on to say with respect to the proposed application of the user-pay concept that it is both inequitable and short-sighted, and the Corporation is strongly opposed to the application of a user-pay philosophy or cost recovery as proposed in Clause 4 of Bill C-75. It also stated that it believes these proposed charges, as well as the existing revenue recoveries levied against the seaway system, represent an unfair form of indirect taxation. Further, it believes that the future extent of all proposed user charges can be quantified and compared closely to all similar charges imposed on other major transportation modes.

In recent testimony before the Senate Committee on Transport and Communications, His Worship Jack Masters, a former Member of Parliament and, I must say he was an able

Member of Parliament, a Liberal Member at that, stated that the City of Thunder Bay opposed Bill C-75. He further indicated: "Clause 4 of the legislation threatened 5,000 jobs in Thunder Bay" and said that "Clause 4 has the potential to greatly damage the economy of western Canada, the Great Lakes and Canada as a whole. Clause 4 should not be allowed to destroy our great inland waterway."

I think that sums up the brief presented by the Thunder Bay Economic Development Corporation.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Hon. Member during his speech. I have been listening very attentively to it and he makes considerable sense. The Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) has spoken for quite a length of time, and in view of the urgent nature of his submissions, could you seek the unanimous consent of the House to ask the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe some questions at this point.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Nunziata: As I understand, the Hon. Member—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I note there is not unanimous consent. Debate.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a rare day that a Member is prepared to stand and defend the logic of the arguments he puts forward on behalf of the citizens of Canada. Members of Parliament opposite are mumbling and grumbling under their breath and are grumbling to themselves. If they do not agree with the compelling logic of my remarks, why do they not take the occasion to give consent, stand on their feet to defend or to seek to destroy, if they can, the arguments I put forward and indeed the arguments of so many people in Canada who will be negatively affected by this Bill? Having noted the great confidence that Members have shown in their own Bill by their silence, having noted that they are obvious only by their silence, I shall continue. I have much to say about this Bill.

Just to keep Members of Parliament on the edge of their seats, as they have been for the last little while about this Bill, and to broaden their understanding of transportation and the implications of this Bill, I want to talk about the impact of the Bill as it affects oil rigs. This is just a little change of pace for Members for a short while, Mr. Speaker.

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Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been some discussions among the Parties and I think you will find there is unanimous consent to the following. I move: