

this is an excellent idea. It is not an over-imposition on the Government. Presumably, the Government of the day will still have a working majority on the Transport Committee. Presumably an automatic review would be an opportunity to air concerns, to propose alternatives, to discuss the experience and to analyse the degree to which the objectives have been accomplished. It will not be merely a bi-annual bear-pit such as what might come about if there was a sort of tribunal process. Again, that is something a Government that is truly interested in the exercise of democracy could easily incorporate.

Motion No. 11 provides that the clause not come into effect before January 1, 1988. I think this shows how carefully the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan has thought out the amendments. He is not seeking to establish a process that would immediately bring down complaints on the Government. Under this sort of provision, there would have to be a working-out period in which the users, the exporters and the Government itself would have a chance to look at the experience and, indeed, would be forced to do so if they were to come before the parliamentary committee and cogently reason the case for the changes they might propose.

I think it is worth while to review some of the opposition there has been to Bill C-75, and particularly to Clause 4. We know, of course, that boaters everywhere in Canada, as represented by the Council of Boating Organizations of Canada and through their own personal submissions, have stated their concern about the way Clause 4 might be used. The whole principle of Government by laws and not Government by men is to protect the citizen from the arbitrary exercise of power. I am afraid that by setting up Clause 4 in the way it is, the Government is in fact permitting, and may well be encouraging, the exercise of arbitrary power over the boaters of Canada, although, after all, boating may not be a momentous area of human endeavour.

The St. Lawrence Shipowners Association has said the following about the Bill:

—we do not agree that we should give the government a blank cheque, which would allow it to set up a fee system about which we know nothing at the present time.

I recall to Members of Parliament the title of the recent discussion paper issued by the Ministry of External Affairs. One of the key words in that title was "competitiveness". I think that is something that has been generally ignored in the framing of Bill C-75. By allowing the Government an unrestrained taxing power restricted only by the total cost—but as I pointed out, that cost is susceptible to many different ways of determination—the Government has set up the users of maritime transportation routes for a possible beating that could very drastically affect their competitive position.

The Seafarers' International Union has said the following:

We cannot have full cost recovery if our Canadian marine industry is to survive. On certain cargoes, the lake companies will just not be able to compete—Therefore we will not have these cargoes.

Algoma Steel, Stelco and Dofasco have said the following:

Canada Shipping Act

—Our big over-all concern is to do with the seaway system itself, upon which we depend, and its lessened competitiveness.

They also mention the chronic over-supply of their commodity, steel, in the present world market.

The International Association of Great Lakes Ports has said:

The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system is a shared asset of Canada and the U.S. For the first time in the history of the seaway, each country is moving unilaterally on matters involving the seaway—

That is a warning of which the House should take very careful notice.

The Dominion Marine Association has said the following:

—this could amount to an additional \$1.65 per tonne for every tonne that moved through the Seaway last year. Given the fact that traffic was down 20 per cent from 1984, this cost could have a dramatic impact on future traffic patterns.

Many other organizations have had something to say about this Bill including the Montreal Chamber of Commerce, the Montreal Board of Trade, Canada Steamships Ltd., the Canadian Shippers' Council, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and the Prince Edward Island Potato Marketing Board. From the number of submissions that were heard in committee, it should be very apparent to the Government that it is establishing a measure which could come back to haunt the Government, a measure which could impair Canada's international competitiveness and could influence and, generally, harmfully modify possible decisions taken by shippers.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton), has referred to this Bill as a Trojan horse document. He said that vessel owners and operators do not know what the cost is going to be. That, I believe, violates a fundamental principle of fairness and equity. I believe it violates a very normal commercial principle, which is that when a good or service is demanded or ordered, it is done so on certain assumptions and with at least a very approximate knowledge of price. That approximate knowledge will now be gone because users will be subject to whatever levy the Government decides to demand, and there is little provision for the modulation of those levies within the frame of reference of what the market can afford.

I would again call on my colleagues on the opposite side to rise to tell us what is wrong with these amendments that they are not going to accept. I think these are reasonable changes which would enshrine a number of key commercial and, indeed, moral principles in this Bill, principles that are sadly lacking at the present time.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity this afternoon during the debate on Bill C-75, to announce that the Liberal Party, the Official Opposition in the House, deplores the Government's decision to maintain Clause 4 in Bill C-75.

My colleague, the previous speaker, moved an amendment to have this clause struck out of the Bill. Unfortunately, after being voted down in Committee, the amendment was rejected by the Speaker in the House on procedural grounds.