

Bill C-61 was debated fully on second reading and considered extensively in hearings before the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications. There was even some travel by the committee to the west coast where it received views with respect to Bill C-61. The bill was returned to the House of Commons for report stage debate. That debate had been well advanced when the session adjourned. Subsequently, in order to expedite consideration of this important legislation, it was decided to separate the two major parts of the bill I have described. Accordingly, Bill C-41 now before the House incorporates only the Maritime Code portion of the previous bill. The coasting trade provisions of Bill C-61 are not contained in Bill C-41. They have been removed and remain to be dealt with separately in a distinct piece of legislation.

● (1550)

There have been extensive discussions among all parties about the appropriate way to handle the bill before us this afternoon, namely, Bill C-41. There was agreement, as Your Honour has noted, to move with unanimous consent directly to third reading and to dispose of the matter without further debate because, as I mentioned, Bill C-41 contains the provisions of the Maritime Code which seem to be supported virtually unanimously and about which there is little disagreement. I would like to thank the House and all members for their co-operation in this respect, and I would like to express appreciation in particular to the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) who has been associated with this piece of legislation throughout its current life. Or Bill C-61 in the last session of parliament, during debates in the House and the work in the standing committee, the hon. gentleman has been most co-operative in trying to expedite the work of the House of Commons and of the committee, and I am most grateful to him for that.

Mr. Paproski: What about the whips and House leaders?

Mr. Goodale: Yes, indeed; the House leaders on both sides and the whips. If the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) wants to make the list all inclusive, I will go back to my first remark in which I indicated that I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the House for their help in dealing with this piece of legislation. On behalf of the Minister of Transport may I express the appreciation and satisfaction of the government that Bill C-41 has been given expeditious attention by the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I just want to add one or two comments on the passage of these portions of the restructured Maritime Code. It represents a major step in the history of maritime commerce in Canada. I think most of us, not only in this Chamber but in the country, who are connected with maritime activities appreciate it. It behooves us now to commend to the parliamentary secretary the degree of urgency felt by a number of related sectors of our economy in the area, and that we get

Maritime Code

ahead with books three and four and eventually with book five of the restructured Maritime Code, and at the same time get ahead as quickly as possible so that these matters might be referred to the standing committee for intensive review. I am referring to the sections of the Maritime Code, namely, sections 6 to 14, which were excluded from the bill as we see it in front of us.

I want to point out the importance of not losing sight of what was the major feature of this package, namely, the rules and directions that Canada wants to follow with respect to the coastal trade and the development of a Canadian register. A Canadian owned and Canadian manned coastal trading fleet remains very important. With those few objections, I am pleased to join the parliamentary secretary in allowing this code to receive third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The House will now proceed to the consideration of order No. 23, the third reading of Bill C-23, to facilitate conversion to the metric system of measurement.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, it would seem expeditious for us now to move into the private members' hour. I trust that will be agreeable to the parliamentary secretary and to all other colleagues in the House.

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, this sounds like a good idea, but perhaps there would be willingness on the other side to give third reading to Bill C-23.

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Before any agreement can be reached to give Bill C-23 third reading, the motion should be put to the House.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I was not being facetious when I raised the matter. It would seem to be inappropriate for us to begin a debate now on what the government on the one hand regards as a matter of some priority, and on the other on which the Minister of State for Small Business (Mr. Marchand) could not answer a question put to him by the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) a few days ago. It might be appropriate if we proceeded now to private members' business. I am sure the minister would not want to start his speech at two minutes to four o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Is it agreed that we call it four o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.