

Canada Shipping Act

How is it that we can responsibly be expected to regard ourselves as Members of Parliament? What does that mean, "Members of Parliament"? Are we a bunch of people who have come here to speak in these hallowed halls, listening to our voices reflecting off the marble pillars, bouncing back at us, attending cocktail parties, sending our householders out four times a year and showing up at election time with a ready smile and a commitment to work hard again? Is that why we are, or are we here to make and examine legislation and to reflect the interests, the concerns and the views of our constituents?

If we are here to make legislation and to reflect the views and the concerns of our constituents, it is an insult, not to Members of Parliament but to the people who send us here, that we should be asked to pass a Bill this day that has contained within it the power and authority given to the Minister of Transport to impose charges on our constituents. I cannot tell my constituents, as this Bill goes sliding through the House, what those charges are going to be. I cannot even tell them if they are going to be charged, if they will be charged how much, or if how much for how long. The Minister says that we should give him the authority now and he will tell us how he is going to use it later.

● (1150)

In Boston a few hundred years ago they tossed the tea over the wharf. It was called the Boston Tea Party. Maybe we need a replay. Those people were standing up for the principle that there shall be no taxation without representation. In this case our constituents have representation in this place, but the representatives are being asked to allow the Minister a new taxing power without knowledge of how the Minister intends to use that power.

The Minister has never had this power before. Throughout the annals of the history of the Parliament of Canada, one cannot find an iota of a power similar to that which the Minister is demanding today. If we were to allow that kind of a measure to go through this House unchallenged as if we were a sea of blind men and women, then the role we play in this House would be no more important than that of the mace which sits on the table. The mace sits unemotionally, uncaring, and unconcerned day in and day out, a blind symbol of authority which can sometimes be used wisely and other times abused. I stand today because I will not have my constituents, through me, insulted by this kind of arrogant, insensitive, uncaring, undemocratic, brutal, blind, and vicious measure called Clause 4.

Clause 4 will not affect only my constituents. In relation to the Canada Shipping Act I am concerned primarily, but not exclusively, about the fishermen of my riding. Fishermen in my riding live on the great northern peninsula, the Port au Port Peninsula, the Bay of Islands, the White Bay region, the northeast coast of Newfoundland, and the great historic and beautiful area of the northeast coast of Notre Dame Bay. I speak as well because I am a Canadian. I understand that my

job is to be a member of the Parliament of Canada, albeit from Newfoundland.

I speak as well for fishermen who live in the great Province of British Columbia, those fishermen tied up at the wharves in the community of Prince Rupert, along the British Columbia coast line and in the area of Vancouver Island. I speak as well for those fishermen who live in the great province of Nova Scotia, be it Southwest Nova or on the great island of Cape Breton. I speak as well for fishermen in P.E.I. and New Brunswick who do not have a voice in this place today because too many Members are prepared, as time grows short and we move toward a recess, to sit silently and blindly allow this measure to pass through Parliament. We in the Liberal Party are not prepared to do that. I hope that when I resume my seat we will find that other Members in the House, perhaps even the Parliamentary Secretary, are not prepared to allow that.

I would like to make people understand those who are about to be affected by the powers contained in Clause 4.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday in the midst of Question Period I made a very unparliamentary comment to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) which I subsequently withdrew. I wish to apologize to the Prime Minister for the use of that language. I wish to apologize to you, Mr. Speaker, for the use of that unparliamentary language. I apologize to all Members of Parliament because I believe that conduct is unwarranted in this Chamber.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I was saying a moment ago that I would like to put a human face on those people who are the recipients of the measures contained in Clause 4. I think I can best do that by reminding Members that through Clause 4 the Government wants to charge for ice-breaking services. Some Canadians might ask themselves what is so bad about that. I will describe a typical community on the great northern peninsula of Newfoundland, an area which I know well because I represent it. That area has an ice-breaking problem.

I will not use as an example a large urban community on the great northern peninsula because such a community has 700 or 800 residents. I will use as an example the small community of Flower's Cove or the community of Port au Choix. People live in those communities by choice because they appreciate a particular way of life. They appreciate a connection with mother earth, uncrowded villages, uncrowded highways, low crime rates, fresh air, a clean environment and a chance to make a living, not in the steel, concrete and glass towers of Ottawa, Toronto, or Montreal, not at the end of a high tech piece of computer technology and not in the rat race of the merchandising centres in the concrete canyons of our cities, but off the land and the sea.

They happen to live in an area where the fishing is good in season. However, on the great northern peninsula in the month of November or December they quit fishing because the