

*Merchant Marine*

moderate when I urged the government to take it in consideration. However that resolution which will be presented to the national convention was amended as follows: That the government take a clear and specific stand on the recommendations of the Darling report.

● (1722)

It would not be a bad idea to repeat the recommendations found in the Darling report, but I will simply mention some. First, the Darling report states that the government has to determine very specific objectives with regard to the problems we have to face in relation to Canadian navigation and international trade.

A second recommendation, or prerequisite to the establishment of a merchant marine, is the unification and co-ordination of responsibilities within the government. There is nobody in the government who has the power to make a decision about the establishment or non-establishment of a Canadian merchant marine. I know that the file is in the hands of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lapointe), but studies and numerous reports have been prepared by the Departments of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Public Works and others on the costs and possibilities related to the establishment of that Canadian merchant marine. Therefore, what we are asking for, and it is the main recommendation of the Darling report, is to bring together within the government and to put under one minister the whole matter of the final examination of those heaps of reports and studies sponsored by the government perhaps in an attempt to prove—and I am being nasty—that a merchant marine was not profitable or applicable to Canada. But what do you want? Every study we have seen was in support of the establishment of a Canadian merchant marine. I wonder why the government is still waiting to take this position, because, as I said before, I think that legislation on a Canadian merchant marine, for we already have a maritime code, can only bring about new studies and piles of reports that will be shelved as was the Darling report published nearly two years ago, and I wonder how far along is the study by the responsible officials who recommended the drafting of that report. Several agencies are involved, and we keep wondering because each one wants to establish its own priorities. In the end, Mr. Speaker, we no longer have any priorities at all when it comes to a Canadian merchant marine. I for one, as a Canadian, am proud of my country which, as I said a moment ago when quoting the letter from Mr. Louis Rochette, borders on three oceans and boasts a very flourishing international export and import market. I am wondering what the Canadian government is waiting for to consider the question of navigation—I am not saying shipbuilding, Mr. Speaker, I'll bring up that matter in future debates—the issue of shipyards.

Shipping must be considered as being an economic sector like any other, but perhaps more important than some of them. Mr. Speaker, this is what I am asking from the government today, and I hope that I shall not have to come back to it. The last time I spoke on shipping, I told myself: I hope this is the last speech I have to make on this subject. So I hope that today

[Mr. Guay (Lévis).]

I am introducing some new elements in the debate, some arguments that may have weakened the speech made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, and which may lead to a decision, once and for all. About two years ago, a newspaper of the south shore, of my own area, ran an article entitled "Shipping in Canada" let's settle the matter.

That is all I am asking, Mr. Speaker, that is all I am asking of the Canadian government. I am therefore convinced that it is important to establish a Canadian merchant marine. Several hon. members who will take part in this debate are also convinced of that. All the government has to do is to prove to me that it is impossible to establish such a fleet and we will put an end to this debate that I consider as a lot of repetitions that are of no use to the House. I represent an area where the main employer in metropolitan Quebec city is the Davie Shipbuilding Ltd, of Lauzon, a company which gives us both direct and indirect jobs. It is therefore important to Quebec city area residents that marine construction make a step forward, not backward.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a letter which was sent to me by labour unions and these people tell me they are worried because they do not know if the shipyard workers will be able to hang on to their jobs. They are also anxious to know if tomorrow they will still have a job to earn a living for themselves and their families, if they will be able to find a job in their own area; otherwise, they could be forced to move.

Mr. Speaker, I also received from the Canadian Labour Congress a letter commenting the recommendations contained in the Darling report signed by President Donald Macdonald. A long time ago a questionnaire was sent to hon. members concerning the Darling report. I never communicated further with Mr. Macdonald to know if some members had answered that questionnaire which read as follows:

1. Do you support the main recommendations of the Darling report contained in the attached summary? Yes or no.
2. If you support the Darling report or if you consider favourably its basic recommendations, will you press for its fast implementation? Yes or no.
3. If the government persists in ignoring the Darling report, would you support a private member's bill to implement its main recommendations? Yes or no.
4. Comments.

You are invited to make your comments.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I am trying to answer that questionnaire now. I wish all hon. members would take that same responsibility and tell us what they intend to do, particularly those who must make that decision. I wonder who should make that decision and I shall ask the parliamentary secretary, when he takes the floor, if that decision should not be made by his department unless he tells us who should make it. I am tired of repeating the same thing and of pressing continuously this government to put an end to those very costly studies. It should stop this and tell us yes or no. I do not think it is all that complicated.

Mr. Speaker, there were times when we were first in global shipbuilding. Since 1867 our prestige has plummeted. It may not have completely vanished, but we now rank very low. I