

Canada Shipping Act

who have to pay for services, but it is my understanding, and I stand to be corrected, that charges will not apply to vessels which do not use the services of icebreakers. If memory serves me correctly, that is already in the Bill as it stands. Like other Members I would certainly like to see the charges set out in the Bill, but if the Minister is not prepared to do that at this time, then I am sure that the ship owners and shipping companies are quite capable, given the 90-day notice they will receive, of preparing something to give some guidance to the Minister and his staff as to what exactly the charges should be.

Mr. Tobin: It is a terrible Bill.

Mr. Johnson: I am sure the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) is saying that in jest. He knows that it is long overdue. He is simply envious of the Progressive Conservative Government because it had the initiative to bring the long needed amendments to the Canada Shipping Act in place.

● (1730)

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the series of motions that have been grouped for debate on Bill C-75. Motion Nos. 4, 6 and 11 deal with Clause 4 of the Bill which has been particularly controversial. Many of the witnesses who appeared before the committee asked that that clause be deleted from the Bill.

Members of the committee were ruled out of order when they attempted to delete that clause from the Bill. Consequently, the motion which most of the witnesses preferred cannot be introduced again in the House, having already been tested in the committee.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan (Mr. Angus), is left with no choice but to attempt to amend what is essentially a bad piece of legislation in order to make it as palatable as possible. My colleague's motion attempts to give more parliamentary oversight to the imposition of fees for a variety of shipping services. One of the motions calls for the referral of the matter to a committee upon the written recommendation of 20 Members of the House. The second motion provides for an automatic review before the Transport Committee every two years so that the affected parties who are being charged these rates could presumably appear before the committee to give their opinion on the policy behind the rates.

Motion No. 11 would require that Clause 4 of the Shipping Act not come into effect until January 1, 1988. This is in keeping with the representations made by a wide variety of individuals who appeared before that legislative committee, asking that proper time be given. While their arguments varied, essentially they were saying that they are not certain there has been proper consideration given to the impact of this policy on various ports. For example, some ports would have higher charges due to the requirements of dredging, pilotage services, ice-breaking services and so on. Other ports might be deeper or be situated in warm water areas.

Previous to the 1960s, Canada had a transportation policy which looked upon transportation as one of the vital services required by all Canadians. When we considered the vast expanse of this country, we realized that the great distances involved meant that we must use some seaports and waterways that might not be competitive on a world-wide basis but would provide services for the people who live in those parts of Canada. Consequently, the Port of Churchill remains open. It is an Arctic port that needs much dredging because the shipping that is available today draws more water than ships which sailed there 20 years ago. While it was felt that the port was very competitive—

Mr. Forrestal: What does that have to do with the amendment?

Mr. Althouse: —20 years ago, it is having difficulty remaining competitive now. I remind the Hon. Member from Halifax, who keeps saying that we are not relevant, that these amendments give those ports an opportunity to be heard every two years and allows them two years to prepare their case. It would give future Members in the House of Commons an opportunity to appeal the actions of the Department on behalf of those ports.

The philosophy which regarded transportation as an essential service to all Canadians has been abandoned by the present Government and the previous Liberal Government and replaced by an attempt to invoke user pay. Such a measure will put ports like Churchill at a disadvantage. Consequently, a vast region of the country will find it even more expensive to obtain services and shipping because of the additional charges levied directly on the users of that port, for the dredging and the use of ice-breakers which accompany the shipping into Churchill during its shipping season, as short as it is. Such charges make it very difficult to maintain equal services to Canadians, regardless of where they live.

Sometimes I think the older policy makers in this country had a greater understanding of what makes society and economic activity work well than some of the new intelligencia who are coming out of our schools of management at the present time.

Let me illustrate the kind of problem that arises by telling a true story about a person from my riding. He attended agricultural college and specialized in farm management and efficiency. His older sister, who preceded him in university, had been a plant scientist and in fact was a plant reader for the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa until her retirement approximately a year ago.

During her time on the farm she and her father had established a small orchard. When the younger brother finished his education he immediately began to apply all his management techniques that he learned in college. He got rid of the remaining horses and horse equipment. He mechanized everything with state of the art equipment. He checked his books, his figures and production costs and pared everything to the bone. At the end of the year, when he had finished his