

Canada Shipping Act

services and escorting services. As the Hon. Member for Egmont (Mr. Henderson) and the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) mentioned, these are services which the federal Government, the Coast Guard and the Department of Transport have traditionally paid for. At a time when our potato producers in P.E.I. are receiving one cent or two cents a pound less than what it costs to produce them, for the Government to move in and charge for ice-breaking services in order to open those ports in P.E.I. is just incredible. The same can be said for ice-breaking services in Newfoundland so that fishing vessels can get an early start in the spring. It is just incredible that the Government is imposing fees for navigational aids and ice-breaking services. This winter we are facing not only the worst disaster for western agriculture since perhaps the 1930s because of the drought last summer and the damp weather this fall, but it comes at a time when crop prices are adequate. Adequate prices but poor yields. Now the Government wants to impose charges for ice-breaking in the St. Lawrence and on the Great Lakes, and that is unbelievable.

● (1700)

I point that out because not only is there a great likelihood that the Government will have to provide ice-breaking services later this fall and early in the winter, but also because of the seriousness of the crop situation. Not only are farmers losing their farms, they are applying for welfare. Every night we see on television farms being auctioned off and the RCMP hustling the farmers off their land. This is all being done by a Tory Government. The earnings of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool for 1985-86 will be down as much as 50 per cent from 1984-85. The Alberta Wheat Pool expects that its 1985-86 earnings will be down as much as 74 per cent from 1984-85. Statistics Canada's most recent estimate, which was released in July of this year and certainly things have deteriorated since then, said that the 1985 realized net farm income in Manitoba was \$299 million, down 15 per cent. In Saskatchewan it was \$693 million, down 32 per cent. In Alberta it was \$437 million, down 24 per cent. We are looking at an over-all decrease of 15 per cent in July. That will probably get worse because of the very wet harvest season which will result not only in many crops not being taken off, but those that are will have substantially reduced grades which cannot even be sold in international markets.

I would also point out that, in addition to this disaster in western Canada, we have had major damage to Lock 7, I believe, in the Welland Canal. A few days ago the Seaway Authority said it would take three weeks to fix, and I understand it will now be more than a month. There are 32 vessels backed up behind that lock and if that grain has to be shipped by rail, it will mean an additional cost of \$10 to \$15 a tonne for the producer. These vessels are sitting idle, laying off their crews and this Government is sitting on its hands and trying to impose new user fees for ice-breaking and navigational aids. If the provincial Governments can provide highways and signs and all the rest of it, then surely the Department of Transport should be able to provide navigational aids. What is going to happen if the Minister does not provide proper navigational

aids for the Soo Locks? A lot of people do not realize that the Soo Locks handle more shipping than the Suez and Panama Canals put together. If the Coast Guard does not provide the proper navigational aids for the Soo Locks and out into Whitefish Bay and there is a marine disaster, what will the Minister do, throw up his hands and say that they did not pay for the aids so if they have a shipwreck it is their problem? Navigational aids are the responsibility of the federal Government and it is unthinkable for the Government not to provide them. This clause in the Act should be withdrawn.

Neither is it reasonable for the Government to charge the shipping industry for these services. If you look at the 330 Tory promises during the election campaign, you will see that one promise was to upgrade navigational aids and systems to ensure increased marine safety.

Mr. Mazankowski: Right.

Mr. Foster: I do not see any provision in there for charging for that service.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Foster: Surely that is breaking faith with the Canadian people.

Mr. Mazankowski: You are unreal. You cannot even say that with a straight face.

Mr. Foster: There is no provision in the promise for charging for these services. I defy any of the Members opposite to say that they said they were going to charge for these services. They said only that they were going to provide upgraded navigational aids and systems to ensure increased marine safety. They said nothing about charging for it. They also talked about improved search and rescue. I have not heard the Minister get around to doing that. If he is going to provide increased search and rescue services, is he going to charge for it? Does the person who is in serious danger have to pay to be rescued? We are talking about \$1,000 an hour for ice-breaking services so it is a very expensive business.

● (1710)

The 20 promises with regard to transportation include an undertaking to conduct a review of CN Marine ferry services to guarantee that they are equitable and not damaging to the competitiveness of local industries with particular reference to tourism. As I recall, Mr. Speaker, the provisions of black Thursday, November 8, 1984 when the Government lowered the boom on Atlantic Canada, were to increase the charges on marine transportation in Atlantic Canada. Now they not only want to increase those charges, as they did on black Thursday, but they want to charge for ice-breaking in those harbours in Atlantic Canada and to charge even for the navigational aids. It is unbelievable that this Bill provides for such horrendous charges on Canadian maritime activities.

I hope that the Minister will withdraw that section or give a commitment that he will not be charging. I think it is entirely possible that we may have to extend the navigation season