

Canada Shipping Act

hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose) with regard to the matter of insurance and unlimited liability. I assume that the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) is piloting this bill through the house in the absence of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson), in whose name the bill is on the order paper.

If the provisions of the Canada Shipping Act concerning unlimited liability are being lifted, it seems to me that the insurance provisions regarding limited liability will need very high ceilings. To realize this one has only to consider the experience in Great Britain and the multi-millions it has cost the government of that country, as well as the experience off the coast of California and the multi-millions it has cost that state and the federal government.

We have only to consider what would happen if a super-tanker broke up in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. If the Minister of Fisheries thinks he now has trouble in the maritimes with regard to fisheries, I ask him to imagine the trouble that would be caused in an inland water such as the Gulf of St. Lawrence if a super-tanker were to break up.

I think all members of the house would be interested in hearing from the minister what the government has in mind regarding insurance coverage for shipping of the super-tanker category with a cargo-carrying capacity of 150,000 or 200,000 tons that arrives at salt water ports in Canada. One can imagine what would happen at the new super port of Roberts Bank, British Columbia, if one of these vessels were to meet with a catastrophe.

We are dealing with the question of unlimited liability, and let me give this example. I drive my car, which carries something approaching \$250,000 public liability insurance. But you and I, Mr. Speaker, both know that there is something a great deal more valuable than the car, namely myself. I am a little leery about legal limitations placed upon insurance liability which use as a criteria the value of the carrier and its cargo. If unlimited liability insurance is not to be imposed, surely the limits of liability will need to be very high. This is surely an area wherein government foresight can provide for any unexpected circumstances that may arise.

I invite the minister to tell us what the government has in mind regarding insurance, particularly in respect of super-tankers and vessels carrying cargoes that are of a pollutant nature. This is surely not something in respect of which we can just wait until an accident happens. The very nature of some of

[Mr. Benjamin.]

our salt-water ports in Canada, some of which are a great distance inland, requires some sort of extra precaution.

I also suggest to the minister—he may be able to inform us on this—that there is validity in government participation in marine insurance with shipping companies, international insurance companies and carriers of deep sea cargoes, particularly in respect of massive vessels, to assist in the enlarging of so-called limited liability.

We would be very interested in hearing from the minister what kind of research and investigation has gone into this matter, particularly in light of the unfortunate experience in two other countries. Surely, in light of the kind of facilities we envisage building, and in light of the inland shipping waterways which undoubtedly 10 or 20 years from now will be enlarged to handle ever larger vessels which will carry cargoes of a pollutant nature, we require of the government enough foresight to make regulations and laws that do not just throw out this unlimited liability business, forgetting the kind of liability these carriers of cargo have to the public.

It is not sufficient to wait until an incident happens and then rely on the public purse to pay for all the damages. I invite the minister to let us know now what proposals he or the Minister of Transport have in connection with insurance for the new and enlarged kind of cargo-carrying vessels we have now and will have to a larger degree in the future.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications.

FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT LOANS ACT**AMENDMENT TO INCREASE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF LOAN**

Hon. Jack Davis (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-195, to amend the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, before this bill passes I am sure the minister wants to make some comments. I would gladly yield the floor to the minister in order that he may make those comments.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, I will explain this bill very briefly. It involves several amendments to the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act. The principal amendment is one that would raise the ceiling of an individual