

which could in turn cause some difficulties for Canada in its general trade relations.

Mr. Skelly: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister just made an error which is so important he might want to correct it. It was not one or two shipbuilding interests, it was representatives from the Shipbuilding and Ship Repair Association which represents all shipbuilders in Canada. I wonder if he might wish to correct that.

Mr. MacLaren: I have noted the comments of the Hon. Member opposite. We have not only received such a representation but, as I indicated, we have received one or two representations from individual shipbuilding interests as well. I ask the Hon. Member to recognize that equally we have had indications from some fishing interests, an industry which has been passing through a very difficult time recently, I hardly need remind the House, that we should not impose any such increase in duties. Equally we have kept in mind the recommendations of the Kirby Commission which would have the Government eliminate all duties on fishing vessels, whether above or below 30 metres in length.

Be that as it may, the situation seemed to us one that warranted rapid but careful consideration of the interests involved, whether they be the shipbuilding industry on one side or the fishing industry on the other side. With that in mind, the Government in past weeks has undertaken an extensive survey of the opinion in the fishing industry and shipbuilding industries as well as in, for example, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and relevant provincial Governments, about their views on the possibility of imposing a duty on fishing vessels over 30 metres in length so as to prevent any loss of production or employment at Canadian shipyards and in allied industries.

We have undertaken such a quick survey, Mr. Speaker. The adoption of the Bill this afternoon will in no way change the present tariff status of fishing vessels entering Canada which are over 30 metres in length. What we would propose to do is analyse the results of our survey in consultation with the private sector and then we will be in a better position to decide how best to act. That can be done through a Ways and Means motion at any time. I would hope that Members opposite would agree that the prudent and well advised way to proceed this afternoon is to adopt the Bill as we had discussed in previous informal contacts and then proceed separately with regard to tariffs on fishing vessels in light of the survey and consultations that the Government is currently undertaking.

Mr. Blenkarn: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the Minister is not required to answer questions at this stage of debate. However, in view of the fact that there are relatively few people who are likely to take part in the debate, I was wondering if he would consent to answer questions. The Minister has certainly not exhausted any reasonable length of time in his presentation of the Bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. Our Standing Orders do not call for questions and comments in the

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first round of speakers. If unanimous consent is asked for, I will inquire of the House if there is unanimous consent.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Debate.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, in responding to the remarks of the Minister on Bill C-16, let me indicate our disappointment that he would not accept questions. That would allow us to bear down on the areas of difficulty which Bill C-16 presents. It might allow us to resolve any differences of opinion which might exist. I think the will of the House is to support Bill C-16 as being not only essential for the development of the Canadian offshore and shipbuilding industries but, indeed, long overdue as evidenced by the fact that the effective date of the Bill is June 30, 1983. If we had the opportunity of questioning the Minister, it might accelerate the process of passing the Bill. However, I am left with little alternative but to review on behalf of the Official Opposition our views with respect to Bill C-16, although we support the provisions of the Bill in substance.

The Bill in effect extends the territory of Canada to include the Continental Shelf as defined in Clause 2. That is basically the 200-mile zone that now exists off the coasts of Canada, brought about by international agreement. In the future, commencing with the effective date of this Bill, which as I have indicated is June 30, 1983, the territory of Canada for customs and excise purposes will extend to the limit of that 200-mile zone. That measure is overdue and quite necessary in the circumstances.

In the result, Mr. Speaker, the Bill relates to two very important areas. I do not think any of us will quarrel with the specific measures designed to implement this extension of jurisdiction in the application of the customs and excise laws of Canada. However, as I have indicated, we do want to consider the two main elements involved in this process. Those are the effect on the Canadian shipbuilding industry, and the offshore industry which has been so active in the past few years off the coasts of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and which shows every sign of being a substantial economic force in the future if we take the right steps to manage and encourage this industry and those who are involved or might be involved in it in the future. Therefore, I want to deal with those two areas of shipbuilding and offshore development as they are affected by Bill C-16 and the measures that will be imposed once the Bill is enacted.

● (1640)

With respect to the Canadian shipbuilding industry, I heard the Minister indicate that there would be benefits of \$10 billion over the next 10 years as a result of the measures taken in Bill C-16. It is a little difficult to understand what the Minister means by this allegation, because for the last few years the value of the shipbuilding industry in Canada has approached \$1 billion. In fact, in 1982, the value of shipbuild-