

Estate Tax Act

work already done by the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications of this house, because this was a matter in respect of which a considerable amount of evidence was heard when the committee recently visited the Atlantic provinces.

I am very glad indeed that the minister has decided to have this study undertaken, because not only is this of interest to those in the Atlantic provinces but also to others, since the question of a merchant marine for Canada is of great importance to people in parts of Canada other than the maritime provinces, and of course those engaged in shipbuilding. It is of great importance indeed.

I am very glad to see that some concrete steps are being taken to ascertain whether it is economically feasible for us to have a merchant marine. Consequent upon this decision, and equally as important, is the question as to whether we can build the ships ourselves.

I am sure everyone welcomes this announcement by the minister, and trust the study will not take too long. I hope it will not take longer than 12 months, because everyone would like to see immediate action in this regard.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I should like to congratulate the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) upon initiating a study into the economic feasibility of a Canadian deep sea fleet. At the end of the war we had one of the finest merchant fleets in the world, but gradually we have allowed it to be eroded. Many of the ships that were sailing under the Canadian flag were allowed to transfer their registry to other places, particularly Panama.

Even the payment of subsidies for shipbuilding has not solved this problem. Only the other day when an hon. member raised the matter in the house of the *Cape Breton Miner*, which was built with government subsidy under an agreement requiring that for five years it must stay under Canadian registry, it was discovered that almost to the day five years later it was transferred to another registry.

At the present time Canadians are paying in the neighbourhood of \$500 million per year to other countries to transport our goods to the markets of the world. We have a tremendous potential here; we have all the raw material necessary to build ships, and we have people on both coasts who are familiar with sailing ships. A deep sea fleet for Canada would provide employment not only for those who build ships and make the materials

that go into them, but also for those who sail the ships.

Therefore I only regret that such a study was not commenced many years ago. I congratulate the minister on initiating this now and I hope that if the report which he receives is favourable, the government will proceed to do something about this very serious lack in the Canadian economy.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, we have listened attentively and with pleasure to the minister's announcement that a study will be made into the economic feasibility and the practicability of a merchant marine for Canada.

Unfortunately, it is only when it is already too late that the government takes action and assumes its responsibilities. It is quite late, I think, to establish a task force. It is only after Canadian Vickers in Montreal and the Lauzon shipyards have closed down that it is decided to study the practicability of a merchant marine.

Mr. Speaker, the question of Canada having a merchant marine has been discussed since 1896. The successive governments have all failed to carry out their responsibilities in this matter.

Today, the minister tells us the commission will make a twelve-month study after which we will be told that operation costs are higher in Canada than in Japan or the United States. Our situation will be exactly the same. We do not need studies as much as action. If the government took its responsibilities and told us that in twelve months a merchant marine will be established, we would get results instead of worthless studies.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very good thing to appoint task forces composed of sociologists, economists, ministers and anyone you like, but it does not help the creation of a merchant marine in Canada and this is what is required right now, to help the workers of Canadian shipyards.

• (2:20 p.m.)

[*English*]

ESTATE TAX ACT

TABLING OF SUMMARY OF INTERPRETATIONS
BY OFFICIALS

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) asked me to table a summary of interpretations and undertakings concerning certain provisions of