

*Maritime Code*

have said, I look forward to the contributions which no doubt will be made in this debate by hon. members from all sides of the House.

● (1450)

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East):** Mr. Speaker, my first words must be to congratulate that fellow from Saskatchewan, the parliamentary secretary, not so much for his delivery of a technical address to us this afternoon but for following in the finest tradition of seafaring men from Saskatchewan—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Forrestall:**—of which the Royal Canadian Navy had many and of whom we were very proud during the war, many of whom have found residence in the Atlantic provinces.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** There is only one in doubt, and that is the minister.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Having said that, I must say that I could not follow the parliamentary secretary at all because he delivered a highly technical and, I am sure, a very valuable summary of the maritime code which is in front of us. Canadians have been waiting for this code since 1854, when we had the old, British system. I suppose this is a bit of watermark for us. We have tinkered with and made hundreds of amendments to this act. We took it from what was referred to as the old merchant shipping act. Now we call it the Canada Shipping Act. It has been called the maritime act; it has been called everything. Now we call it the maritime code. The fact of the matter is that as Canadians we have been waiting since 1854 for it, and before we do away with what we have lived with for 120 years or so, perhaps our appreciation to the United Kingdom and to the British shipping community should go on record for having lent us their expertise, guidance, direction and laws until this point in time.

In a sense, I suppose I am saying I welcome this effort by the two distinguished gentlemen from Saskatchewan with respect to maritime matters, and I say that very sincerely. Frankly, credit for it, I think, must go directly to the predecessor of the minister and to those with whom he worked and with whom the present minister must work in putting in place this bill.

**Mr. McCleave:** And Howard Darling.

**Mr. Forrestall:** And, of course, Howard Darling, from whom all good blessings in the direction of an ultimate Canadian merchant fleet seem to have been flowing in recent months.

**Mr. McCleave:** He is everybody's "darling" except the government's.

**Mr. Forrestall:** We welcome this bill because, as the parliamentary secretary said, it brings together in one unified code the various sections of a number of different statutes. It brings together in one single document, as the parliamentary secretary said, five separate books which in fact will bring some order into the chaotic situation we have had until this point in time. We welcome it. We note,

as well, that it reflects pretty closely the sentiments of Bill C-216 which had an abortive introduction in the House back in July, 1973. In the process of considering this matter, I hope the minister will have a few minutes to speak, but I wish to place in front of him an inquiry as to whether this bill reflects any philosophical differences from the bill introduced originally in 1973. Most of us are too lazy to go back and reread it all, and perhaps the minister could tell us the basis of his briefing.

As I have said, we recognize the need to codify and bring together under this new code the somewhat confusing legislation which we find at times in our Canada Shipping Act, the steamship act, the steamship inspection act, and on through our various fisheries acts, environmental acts, and so on, and to present it in clear language. I emphasize the need for clear language not only in the legislation, but also in the regulations which will flow from it. In that respect, I would also place before the minister an inquiry as to whether he might give the shipping community interests in Canada, as well as the House and the standing committee, an opportunity to question him with respect to certain of the regulations which it is anticipated will flow from this legislation. We would appreciate the opportunity of commenting on them and to make some observations, if the minister feels that is a proper way to approach this particular bill. The regulations cannot be changed substantively because in effect they are doing the same thing as we were doing under old acts, so I hope that in this particular instance the minister will give us an opportunity to review certain of the regulations.

We also await with some eagerness the remaining chapters in connection with this new law and the long-promised section to deal with the general headings of crew, cargo, and operational standards. These are equally important to us. Hopefully, the community will not be kept waiting too long for clarification of the attitude of the government in these areas. Hopefully, we will be able to see the balance of this legislation before the end of this session, if in fact we get around to dealing with it, and perhaps the minister might respond to that at a later date.

In connection with this matter we file the caveats which have been alluded to by the parliamentary secretary. They have to do with the registration procedures and the centralization program, and the impact this will have in terms of the convenience of shipowners, particularly small craft owners, fishing vessel owners, and so on. A further caveat which would naturally flow from that would relate to a fear we might have—and we hope for some expression, again, in committee or from the minister this afternoon—as to the administrative burden which this legislation will place upon shipowners in terms of documents to fill out, papers to file, certificates to register, and so on. We reserve the right to look fairly closely at that particular aspect.

If I did not miss too much of what the parliamentary secretary had to say, I suggest he did not deal with the intentions of the government with respect to the shipping community interest. We will very much want to have the views of the shipping community generally, the maritime associations and shipowners associations. I think we should hear from the CBRT, and probably the SIU, with respect to the implications of this for the Canadian ship-