

Canada Shipping Act

to charge only foreigners, then he should put it in the Bill. The Minister's original analogy which compared this mode with the air transportation mode certainly signals to me that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) really does not understand the icebreaker services in eastern Canada.

Mr. Brisco: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) if he would not agree that the questions he has addressed and the other questions that have been raised must best be answered in a committee and that the faster we get the Bill into committee the better it will be?

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member who moved the motion is identified by this Party as the Hon. Member from Prince Edward Island. He represents that province ably in this Parliament. In this particular case, he is standing up for the people of Prince Edward Island and is making sure that the Government does not impose charges on the potato growers and primary producers of this country.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity on the Canada Shipping Act or, as it now happens, to speak on the hoist motion. One might think that a person from the middle of the Prairies would have little knowledge of or interest in shipping and the Shipping Act.

Mr. Mazankowski: Probably a lot more than what we heard from over there.

● (1540)

Mr. Hovdebo: All Canadians must be concerned about how goods are moved in Canada. Canada is a country dependent upon trade—some people would say too much so. We must be sure that regulations which control the movement of goods in and out of Canada do not impose a burden, making it more difficult for us to be involved in trade by forcing organizations such as transportation companies to pay more, thereby discouraging them to use the available facilities. The Bill seems to do just that. It decreases the possible use of facilities. In many ways the Bill proposes what is necessary to be done. It establishes regulations which will increase safety and encourage the use of facilities. However, there is one exception. I refer to the cost recovery clause in this particular Bill upon which I will comment later.

What I wish to comment on at the beginning is the Government's responsibility with regard to this type of situation. First, it is the responsibility of the Government to keep the shipping lanes open in order that they can be used by domestic or foreign shippers. The St. Lawrence Seaway is presently inoperable because of the collapse of part of the walls of the Welland Canal which is blocking Lock 7. This could be said to have been just an accident. However, it would be interesting to look into the reasons behind the closing of the Welland Canal. This blockage is costing shipping companies approximately \$20 million a day. Who is responsible for the fact that the Welland Canal is not open to shipping? No doubt the cost of \$20 million a day will be passed on in some form or another to

the people using the canal. In this case a great deal of the cost will be passed on to the farmers who are shipping grain through the canal.

Over the years the Government has been collecting fees for the use of the Welland Canal and the St. Lawrence Seaway. In the case of the St. Lawrence Seaway it has put aside \$30 million or more which is to be used for maintenance of the Seaway. The same has been done with respect to the Welland Canal. This means that the Department of Transport recognizes the need to have money in place for maintenance. Therefore, the Department must take some responsibility for the closure in that it has not done the type of maintenance which would have made it less likely.

To a question put to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) the other day one of my colleagues received an unsatisfactory answer in that the Minister did not indicate that the Government is willing to spend the money which is available for maintenance. It will not take the \$30 million which it has taken out of capital from the Seaway and spend it on maintenance, which will prevent closings such as those which have taken place in the past. This is the key issue in the Bill. It is dealt with in Clause 4. The rest of the Bill establishes acceptable regulations for shipping and is needed legislation which should have been put in place quite some time ago, as I understand from my colleagues who know a little more about the subject. Clause 4 is enabling legislation which would allow the Department of Transport to recover the costs for what have been considered a national responsibility in the past.

It is the user-pay philosophy in the Bill which we in the Opposition challenge. When service becomes the responsibility of the user and ceases to be the responsibility of the nation, then we have to look at exactly how it will be paid for and who will be paying for it. The user-pay philosophy needs close scrutiny by the Government and by Parliament because its application can have a tremendous effect on the viability of many industries in Canada. If the user-pay philosophy is applied to all services which are now provided partially or in full by the Government, what effect will that have on the type of services which we have available in Canada? I am not speaking only of transportation in this case. The user-pay philosophy can be applied to all types of services. For instance, what type of services would we have if a user-pay philosophy were established for health care? Should only the sick pay for health care or should we all be concerned with respect to the health of the nation? What about sanitation? Should only those people who have need of water and sewer services pay for them? Should those services be recognized as a responsibility of the nation? What about roads and communication services? These are areas in which Canada has taken a national responsibility to provide the service and where user-pay has not been a factor.

Traditionally, transportation has been one of the areas in which the Government has provided the infrastructure and its use has been either free or partially free. Roads are generally paid for by taxes. Signs, markings for intersections and road lighting are usually paid for by municipalities which provide