

*Canada Shipping Act*

currently worded have the Government levying additional fees on Seaway users to recover \$800 million in annual costs to the Canadian Coast Guard and for maintaining navigational aids.

What do we find out in examining the Seaway patterns over the last number of years? We find out that the volume of Seaway traffic has been steadily eroding. It has been steadily declining. Last year, as compared to the previous year, there was a 27 per cent decrease in traffic. That is incredible. We are not talking about a system here that is just slightly wounded.

**Mrs. Sparrow:** The grain is moving the other way.

**Mr. Tobin:** That is right. The Hon. Member from Calgary is absolutely right. The grain is moving the other way, and some of it is moving on the Mississippi system. It is going the other way and our system is not being used. Why? The perception is that it is not dependable. The perception out there in the world is that Canada is not committed to the Seaway, not committed to rejuvenating it. The reality in that perception is that the Government is attempting to lead, squeeze, pound, twist and turn every last penny possible out of the Seaway.

My mother, God bless her, used to have a very simple description of the Government's policy. She used to call it penny wise and pound foolish. The Government is nickelling and diming the carriers, which affects the traffic and the volume of it on the Seaway. Canadians will say: "Why should we be concerned?" If we cannot get the Government to commit itself to rejuvenating the Seaway then we will see its steady decline, its free fall continue. Literally tens of thousands of jobs will be lost, as will a major international artery, a major mode of transportation, be lost to the country. That is why Clause 4 has to be opposed, and opposed extremely vigorously.

Last season the decline of traffic on the Seaway was terrible. Some 37 million metric tonnes were carried on the Montreal-Lake Ontario section. That is a reduction of more than 20 per cent from previous seasons. Volumes on the Welland Canal sank 22 per cent to 42 million metric tonnes. Even worse, volumes and market share in grain and iron ore, which between them account for almost three-quarters of the Seaway's traffic, are steadily dwindling, as the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow) mentioned a moment ago. Money is tight and it is becoming tighter. Last year total revenues totalled \$47 million, some \$11 million less than the previous year. The year before total revenues amounted to \$58 million. We have seen a 22 per cent drop in traffic and an \$11 million drop in total revenues, yet the Government says it can fix that, no problem. The Government says: "We can get that money back. We will raise the rates".

**Mr. Riis:** Why is this happening?

**Mr. Tobin:** Because the Government has not indicated to the people who use the Seaway that it has confidence in the Seaway, that it is prepared to invest in its future. Carriers are saying to themselves that the time has come. After all, it is an

aging Seaway. It is time for the Government to either recommit itself to the Seaway, to show signs that it is serious about its long-term future, or to begin the process of walking out.

**Mr. Riis:** Give me an example of that.

**Mr. Tobin:** The carriers do not see the Government of Canada recommitting itself to the Seaway. They do not see the Government saying that the Seaway has a long-term future. Because they are in the business of moving bulk traffic they are saying: "We'd better find an alternate means of moving our traffic now before we get caught once again behind a collapsed bridge or a collapsed canal".

Why is the Government of Canada not serious about this matter? I will give the Hon. Member an example. The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority had removed from its jurisdiction \$30 million in accumulated revenues by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) as a result of his Budget of last May. This was money which could have been spent by the authority in the pursuit of restoring confidence in the Seaway. Yet the Government, in the face of a disastrous year and in the face of declining tolls, took that money out of the hands of the Seaway. The Government did more than that. It increased by 15 per cent the tolls on the Welland Canal.

**Mr. Riis:** That doesn't seem fair.

**Mr. Tobin:** Not only it is not fair, it is, as my dear mother would say, penny wise but pound foolish.

I say to the Government that the representations by the Great Lakes Seaway Authority, by American Senators, by our partners in the U.S. who help manage the Seaway, by the major carriers, by the Seafarers International Union, and by the Montreal Chamber of Commerce must be listened to. This is what the Montreal Chamber of Commerce had to say on the subject: "It is surprising that on every other aspect of Bill C-75 there has been extensive consultation with industry, but on Clause 4 there has been no consultation whatsoever". Those are the words of the Montreal Chamber of Commerce, which is the heart, the cradle of the St. Lawrence Seaway. It has said that there has been no consultation whatsoever.

Whatever happened to that brand new day that the Prime Minister promised Canadians? I ask Hon. Members if they remember that, or were we all asleep? Was it just a pleasant dream? Was it only something we thought occurred? Was it just an idle promise that we would see a brand new day for Canada, a day on which consultation and not confrontation would be the watchword? Did we not believe that it would be a day on which co-operation as opposed to unilateral action would be the watchword? Would it not be a day when the provinces and the federal Government would sit down at the same table and resolve some of their problems by discussion? Was that all a dream? Was I asleep? Was that the vision that was painted and trailed across the land for all Canadians to behold? Was that the vision that Canadians reached for desperately in excitement in returning 211 Members to the opposite side of the House? Or was it all a passing dream?