



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILLS

**Shipping Registration Amendment (Australian
International Shipping Register) Bill 2012**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Thursday, 31 May 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 31 May 2012
Page 6520
Questioner
Speaker Katter, Bob, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (12:56): In speaking to this amendment I cannot help but praise highly certain people. I have seldom met such genuine individuals, with such fierce determination to represent their people, as Terry Snee, the Federal President of the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, Henning Christensen or Michael Bakhaazi. They have been absolutely relentless in pursuing the objectives embodied in this bill. I also pay tribute to Paddy Crumlin and his union, but the first three people I mentioned have been absolutely relentless on this.

One of their points which had very great traction with me and which pertains to this amendment is the fact that as late as two weeks ago a ship went adrift and smashed into the Barrier Reef because its engines were not working and because it had an incompetent crew who did not know how to fix an engine. It was a very big boat. I apologise to the House because I do not have the name of the boat with me at present. These foreign vessels can just come in, cross our reef any time they feel like it, lose their motors and smash through. Some of these ships have incompetent captains. Some of them are drunk some of the time and some of them have enormous difficulty reading charts that are written in English or communicating on the radio because they have very limited ability in English.

We North Queenslanders have not raised the issue of the Barrier Reef, but we are sick and tired of seeing boats leaking oil all over the Barrier Reef, smashing through the Barrier Reef and losing their engines and just drifting, as that ship did two weeks ago. I draw attention to the honourable opposition spokesman, who obviously thinks it funny—he is laughing—that the Barrier Reef is being destroyed under laws that his party introduced into this place and that they would like to keep. But we do not; we want competent people answerable to the people of Australia running the vessels backwards and forwards.

Almost all the bauxite from Queensland has to come down the coast for processing at Gladstone, and this means that all of our coal—and I mean all of it—has to go out through the Barrier Reef. So it is absolutely imperative to us that we have some knowledge, security and control and that we ensure that the people running the ships are Australians who are responsible to Australian laws, to Australian standards and to Australian conditions and that they have to face the Australian people if they smash the Barrier Reef, one of our nation's greatest assets, to pieces. I again pay a great tribute to the Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers, those three people I referred to before, and also Paddy Crumlin and his union, who have worked so terribly hard to bring attention to bear on this issue. I do not always agree with the unions—sometimes I have had to take very hostile positions—but in this case they had an argument that carried weight with me.

It is with deep regret that I watch my old party being the champion of free trade when they were the party who protected and built our industries. Now they are the party that are blowing up the walls of our fortresses and letting the vandals in—and the vandals came in the form of a ship that ago had no engine and smashed through the Barrier Reef in North Queensland two weeks ago. We had to meet the cost of going and picking up that vessel and towing it into port, where it could be fixed up.

This is good legislation. I praise the minister as one of the first people in this place in my time in here who has actually moved with courage, resolution and intelligence to protect and take forward Australian industry. There is \$178,000 million a year going out of this country to foreign shipping. The Americans will not allow one dollar. The great champions of free markets? Not one dollar. I am sure if you tried to get away with this in Europe they would laugh at you. But the great champions of the free market in here today stand by themselves. You stand by yourself, LNP. There is not another country on earth that agrees with your policies. God bless the minister on this one. (*Time expired*)

Question agreed to.