

SUBMISSION TO ICONS FROM TRANSPORT CANADA

10 August 2000

Canada is fully committed to eradicate sub-standard shipping and welcomes the International Commission on Shipping (ICONS) initiative as a step in the right direction.

To this end, we have coordinated the administrative arrangements to host the hearings that will be held in Vancouver and Montréal in September 2000.

Being a country that exports vast quantities of raw materials and lacking a sizeable Merchant Fleet, Canada is dependent on foreign shipping for both imported and exported cargoes. In particular, we are dependent on bulk carriers to load and transport these bulk commodities from our shores.

In order to ensure that foreign ships arriving in Canada to load or discharge are safe and seaworthy, we have long been a believer in the concept of Port State Control and that information on inspections is shared by states with the same common interest.

To this end, we have been an associate member of the Paris MOU since 1988 and a full fledged member since 1994, the first non-European member. We have also been a founder member of the Tokyo MOU since its inception in 1993.

Prior to our involvement with the two leading Port State Control memoranda, for many years, we utilized our sovereign right to inspect ships by requiring mandatory inspections on ships loading grain in bulk, timber on deck and concentrates. We continue to inspect tankers on their first visit to Canada and at least once a year thereafter.

In 1998, we organized and hosted the first ever Joint Ministerial Conference of the Paris and Tokyo Memoranda of Understanding on Port State Control in order to harmonize activities in the two Regions. The Conference culminated in the signing of a comprehensive declaration known as the "Vancouver Declaration" which contained many important recommendations to increase enforcement measures and to harmonize procedures for inspecting, detaining and reporting sub-standard ships.

Canada plays an active role in the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), contributing to the Organization's wide reaching efforts to promote safe shipping practices throughout the world, and to draw the world's attention to the serious matter of ocean pollution. We are a firm believer that the prime responsibility for the safety of ships rests with the flag State and that port State actions should be the final safety net. IMO should focus on improving the role of flag States through its flag State Implementation Sub-Committee.

Canada has also assisted other economies in developing their maritime administrations and remains committed to International co-operation. We are an active participant in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and its Transportation Working Group. Following the APEC Transport Ministers meeting held in Victoria, B.C. in June 1997 an "Experts Group on Maritime Safety" was formed to identify problems in the Pacific Rim area and to recommend possible solutions. This group, which is chaired by Canada, has made significant progress and has developed a list of high priorities which are being addressed by the APEC Member economies. The work of this group will result in the APEC sponsored "International Symposium on Safer Shipping in the APEC Region" to be held in Sydney, Australia from March 5-7, 2001.

We are also active in the work of the Maritime Transport Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development which in 1996, documented a startling inconsistency between various nation's commitments to eradicate sub-standard practices and the profits derived by some shipowners by not observing international rules and standards.

Despite our best efforts, sub-standard shipping continues to exist. Canada will continue to fight this threat and allocate resources accordingly.

In the coming years we intend to explore several initiatives to improve our efforts to combat sub-standard shipping. Now that we have meaningful inspection data to draw from, we will concentrate our efforts on ships most likely to be sub-standard by selected targeting. This is a concept we first introduced in 1992 when we commenced our 'Bulk Carrier Inspection Regime', whereby selected bulk carriers are targeted for expanded inspections with a particular emphasis on the structural components of the ship.

We also intend to publish more information on detained ships, whereby other parties involved will be named. This could include the charterers and insurers.

An alternate approach we will pursue is to reward "Quality Shipping". The term "Quality" has yet to be defined but it could include ships that have been detention free in Canada following a given number of inspections over a certain period of time. We would then recognize these ships, and their operators, by not inspecting them for a while, giving an award or certificate and positive publicity. Hopefully, charterers would give these ships some priority for their future employment.

Another avenue we are pursuing is to strengthen our ties with the U.S.A. and to harmonize our inspection regimes both domestically and on the international front. We will soon be sharing inspection data and working toward mutual recognition of each others inspections.

Our new Canada Shipping Act will, when passed into law, allow us to ban sub-standard ships from entering Canada, a tool we intend to utilize to the fullest extent.

Attached to this submission is a copy of our 1999 Annual Port State Control Report to give the Commission an overview of our Port State Control activities, the types of ships inspected and the number deficient.

Transport Canada trusts that the information contained in this submission is of use to the International Commission on Shipping and will be following its efforts closely.

Marine Safety
Transport Canada