

ICONS Meeting Montreal 7 September 2000

Transport Canada also hosted a public forum in Montreal on 7 September 2000. ICONS Chairman Peter Morris and Commissioners Captain Barry McKay and Professor Moritaka Hayashi met with shipping agents, the Shipping Federation of Canada, class societies, employee representatives, pilotage authorities, seafarer missions and Transport Canada.

The meeting noted the fundamental responsibility of management to ensure quality in shipping and the need to make shipping a more attractive form of employment. Concern was expressed about the increasing difficulties faced in attracting committed people into shipping careers. Enhanced seafarer training, with assistance and skills transfer from developed countries, is required to lift competency.

The meeting focussed on the human aspects of shipping. Seafarers are often perceived as invisible to the public, ship operators and agents. Greater cooperation among all parties was seen as essential in meeting seafarer's practical needs. An important outcome of the meeting was agreement among missions, unions, agents and Transport Canada to commence meetings to improve coordination of services for seafarers visiting Port Montreal.

It was noted that shipping is driven by commercial concerns and that commercial incentives are needed to eliminate substandard operators. Delays, detentions and arrest of ships are all strong signals. Additional measures could include expanded liability and insurance regimes. Charterers were also considered to have a responsibility to use good quality ships and should be commercially penalised if they don't. It is in the interest of reputable shipping companies and seafarers to speak up about sub standard operators.

Port State control is considered an essential form of regulation, but the meeting felt that it should take more account of human interests. The meeting also saw a need to tackle non-performing Flag States and Class Societies to improve consistency in implementing standards. Greater sharing of information among class, flag and port States was supported.