



**PRESENTATION OF CMPA AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION
TO MARINE SAFETY TO MR. FRANK
NICOL**

Remarks by

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope you have enjoyed your meal this evening and I look forward to seeing you on the dance floor shortly. The night is still young!

At even the happiest celebrations – and surely this grand finale to such a successful Congress is a happy celebration – there should be at least one moment of seriousness. And this is that moment.

It was decided three years ago that the CMPA would present an award in conjunction with the holding of its Congress to an individual who, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, has made an outstanding contribution to marine safety.

Many of you will recall that the first award, was presented during the CMPA's first Congress in Quebec City to Bill O'Neil. Mr. O'Neil had a truly impressive career, culminating in his leadership roles as the most senior Government of Canada official responsible for marine transportation, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization.

We thought it would be very difficult to identify an individual that could receive this award, at this second congress, that could match the eminence and distinction of Bill O'Neil.

As it turned out, it was not hard at all. The perfect choice was just across the Georgia Strait on Vancouver Island, living a modest life in retirement.

Let me sketch out very briefly the highlights of Capt. Frank C. Nicol's career.

Born and educated in Scotland, Frank obtained his Master Certificate after graduating from Leith Nautical College.

Most of his seafaring was in the North and South Atlantic trades in the service of Donaldson Line of Glasgow.

Frank arrived in Canada in 1968 and settled in Montreal. He commenced his shore-side career as Assistant Superintendent with Robert Reford, and then moved on to the operations department at Montreal Shipping.

By far, the longest and most illustrious portion of his shore career was spent with the Shipping Federation of Canada, which, as you know, is the Association that represents the interests of ocean ships engaged in Canada's world trade.

Frank joined the Federation in 1973 as Master of Marine Operations. In this capacity, he began to develop his reputation as a reasonable man, balancing the interests of shipping lines with his commitment to ship safety, responsible pollution regulations, and effective marine pilotage.

His interest in pilotage is perhaps not surprising given that his arrival at Ship Fed coincided with the coming into force of the long-awaited *Pilotage Act*. Frank was one of the people, and there were only a few of them, who were instrumental in making the new *Act* work.

If we are able to say today that Canada has one of the best pilotage systems in the world – and we **can** say that – it is due in no small measure to the efforts of Frank Nicol, to take the great theory of pilotage that was contained in the 1972 legislation and give it practical life.

He did this by being reasonable; by never forgetting the interests of the members of his organization, but always seeking accommodation to address the interests of others, including the public interest.

Frank was appointed President of the Shipping Federation in 1988 and remained in that position until his retirement in 1999.

During his 11 years at the helm of the Federation, Frank helped shape the future of marine transportation. He was involved in the move toward cost recovery for marine services, the commercialization of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Canadian ports system, and the establishment of a much more stringent oil pollution and prevention regime.

While he was doing that, he was also strengthening the Shipping Federation's relationships with government officials and with other members of the marine community.

His service as a member of the Board of the Great Lakes Pilotage Authority, as a member of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, as a President of Mariner's House of Montreal, and as a Member of the Board of Governors of the Association of Maritime Arbitrators of Canada, are all evidence of his wide-reach and influence in the marine community.

For me, Frank Nicol's greatest moment came in the mid 1990s when the pilotage regime that he had done so much to make work so well came under attack.

Ultimately, it was an agreement between the Shipping Federation of Canada and the Canadian Marine Pilots' Association – and I could say it was an agreement between Frank Nicol and Michel Pouliot – regarding work stoppages that allowed pilotage legislation to remain essentially intact in 1998.

What followed then was a year-long Ministerial Review of Outstanding Pilotage Issues, undertaken by the Canadian Transportation Agency. The CTA's Review Panel was headed by the then-Chairman Marian Robson, who is with us this evening.

This Review included an almost mind-numbing number of meetings, in Ottawa and across the country, involving a wide array of marine stakeholders.

The principal players in this lengthy consultative exercise were the marine pilots and the representatives of the shipping industry – the B.C. Chamber of Shipping, the Canadian Shipowners Association, and the Shipping Federation of Canada.

I asked Marian Robson to provide me with a few words of her own assessment of the role Frank Nicol played during the Review. Here is what she said:

“During the Review, we were dealing with many thorny issues and often had very tense meetings involving, among others, pilots and shipping lines.

“I recall, with deep gratitude, the frequent, calm and rational interventions of Frank Nicol on behalf of the Shipping Federation.

“Frank was so well-respected by all the parties that he was often able to use his positive influence to get things back on track.

“I had the impression, as I believe did most other participants at these meetings, that Frank actually transcended his role as representative of the Shipping Federation to act as the honest broker between divergent interests.”

Marian is certainly correct, at least as far as I was concerned, when she said the participants at the discussions regarded Frank as the honest broker – as the senior statesman.

We honour him tonight not because we often found common ground with him on issues important to us, but because we believe he was instrumental in implementing and in defending a pilotage system that is admired by every other country in the world.

As pilots, we have disagreed with Frank, from time to time, but we have never doubted his commitment to safety, and to an effective, independent, pilotage system.