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O'Neil would seek a balance in approach to changes

CANADA'S candidate William O'Neil wants to see IMO strike a balance between high standards and practical achievement.

He envisages an organisation which puts emphasis on practical achievements rather than theory, places a high value on training crews and personnel, yet passes legislation with which the developing world can cope.

He is in favour of continuing the concensus approach which has been the hallmark of IMO under C. P. Srivastava's stewardship but recognises that before any progress can be made, the organisation's financial problems will have to be solved.

The Canadian government, in its lobbying for Mr O'Neil, says IMO needs someone of his calibre, with proven managerial skills and maritime experience, to run the organisation in an efficient and dynamic manner.

William O'Neil is very much an IMO insider, becoming Canada's representative in 1972, and since 1979 chairman of the organisation's council.

He says he would use his management/business experience gained as chairman of the St Lawrence Seaway Authority to solve the budget problem. In policy matters he believes in an

Voting takes place for the new Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation in less than two weeks. Shipping Correspondent JOHN LANDELLS spoke to Canada's candidate William O'Neil.

William O'Neil (right), 61, of Canada, has been president of the St Lawrence Seaway Authority since 1980 and chairman of the Council of the International Maritime Organisation since 1979.

He is a director of Canartic Shipping Company, chairman of the Canadian Committee of Lloyd's Register of Shipping and delegate to the Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses and Canadian representative to the Council of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation.



international approach to shipping.

"I believe I have got the management capability to bring to this organisation and I am very interested in the technical side," he said.

"I know the problems relating to technical co-operation but there is no point dealing in a theoretical way with an industry which is very prac-

tical. You have got to get the two blended and we in IMO cannot lose sight of that fact."

With environmental concern growing, he said it was important that IMO sustained its leading role in the maritime world and it could point to the anti-pollution conventions it had passed long before "green" policies became fashionable.

But in pushing ahead, he believes it is vital not to lose

sight of the capabilities of the shipping industry to make effective changes.

"We are involved in an industry which in the last few years has had financial difficulties and there is a need to balance the desire for technical perfection with the realities of the world as they are.

"We have to examine issues very carefully and take a critical approach but we have to be aware of the changes taking place in international shipping regarding flagging, smaller crews and greater use of technology.

"Technical people always want to be at the forefront of change, while operators stress economic considerations. We have to be careful with legislation, as retrofitting can be very expensive, whereas changing designs can be adapted in new ships fairly easily.

"With advancing technology you have to recognise that some operators do not want to go down this road as quickly as others. Even developed countries can only swallow so much."

It is therefore necessary, he said, to emphasise the importance of training and education, so that new rules and regulations could be implemented effectively on board ships.