

will take place and what are the intentions of this government in this regard?

● (1140)

**Mr. Roberts:** Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech in the House yesterday, that has been an extremely successful program, and therefore I would be happy to undertake to make sure that this contact takes place, if it has not already been made, to see what kind of response we might expect from the provincial government.

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### HARBOURS

#### SOURCE OF MONEY TO FUND TASK FORCE ON NEW POLICY— OPPOSITION OF PROVINCES TO NEW POLICY

**Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I am interested in pursuing with the Minister of Transport the evolving ports policy. The minister told us that the policy is going on under existing legislation, and I am wondering where the money is coming from because no funding was provided for the task force.

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, officials working within the department on the task force report and the approved ports policy are working in the usual way through existing routes to move forward with those parts of the new ports policy which can progress before the legislation is passed. I would have to know to which particular expenditures the hon. member is referring in order to answer more specifically about sources.

**Mr. Fairweather:** As the premiers, I am informed, opposed the new ports policy, and as the throne speech in ringing terms said that we were assured that consultation means that the government will place before interested Canadians its assessment of the major problems we must solve together—a superb use of the English language—I wonder if the minister will put his policy where the government's mouth is.

**Mr. Lang:** We have already very much done so in this case, and have had extensive consultations with the municipalities, the ports and the users of the port facilities. As I read the objections from the provinces, they were almost solely based on the fact that our proposed ports authorities would be composed of various appointees, very fully representing the municipalities concerned, but would not have direct provincial representation. That is a matter of decision on our part, which I think is quite right, but which was objected to, apparently, by the provinces.

The provinces will be allowed a role and will be invited to participate in regional advisory committees. Of course, there will be constant discussions between the port commissions and provincial as well as federal authorities. However, I think it would be wrong to have direct provincial representation on the port commission. The port commission, however appointed, is meant to represent the direct, knowledgeable interest in the

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port and not to represent as such, different levels of government. I think that would be unfortunate. Therefore, I think it is wrong to place very much weight on the objection of the provinces in this regard. The full consent of the municipalities is indeed very often present.

**Mr. Fairweather:** I wonder if I could have what is called a final supplementary. Surely, in the case of a province like New Brunswick the minister must agree that the province itself paid substantial moneys—many millions of dollars—to fulfill an obligation which should have been a federal obligation, and that therefore New Brunswick has an obvious interest in the port commission of the city of Saint John.

**Mr. Lang:** Certainly, the province and the federal government have interests in the port of Saint John and will continue to make arrangements from time to time with that port, for example, where construction is desired which might not be possible without direct assistance from the provinces and the federal government in the future as in the past, but I think that the hon. member will appreciate that our objective in moving to a port commission for that port will be to have the most knowledgeable, actively understanding citizens of the area appointed to a port commission. They can fully represent and understand the interests of the province and work with the province. I do not understand why the hon. member would want the province to be directly represented on that board. I do not see the federal government being directly represented either. The federal government will simply appoint those good and outstanding people to manage the affairs of the port.

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### GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

#### POSSIBILITY OF MOVING PART OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

**Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the honourable and eminent President of the Treasury Board. In the light of widespread reports to the effect that the Treasury Board is studying the transfer of a substantial segment of DVA to Prince Edward Island, can he indicate when this move will take place, and more specifically, if we may expect the move before November 8?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for the implementation of decentralization in the immediate future devolves upon my colleague the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and I undertake to give him notice of the question so that he can respond when he is in the House.