

been asked about it since. At the time I think I said I would be glad to give consideration to the matter, and since then I have done so. I find that it might well be a mistake to set up local advisory boards under the supervision of the national harbours board. I do not see that there would be any objection to a board of trade setting up its own advisory board and discussing with the port manager the changes they felt should be brought about in the community. Some of the recommendations of Sir Alexander Gibb the government saw fit to put into effect, but I fear this is not one which would materially assist the administration of the national ports, unless it be a committee such as has been set up, for instance, in Halifax.

I think those are the questions with which my hon. friend dealt.

Mr. MERRITT: With regard to the last point, concerning the local advisory board, I want to impress upon the minister a fact often mentioned in this house, namely, that out on the west coast we feel a very long way from Ottawa. What might apply to the other ports under the national harbours board does not apply to the situation in which we find ourselves, because we are so detached and on our own in that respect. Even though it might be felt that local advisory boards are not necessary in eastern ports, I want to urge the minister to give the question further consideration in regard to the port of Vancouver.

Just to illustrate that point, the minister mentioned that in other ports dockage rates were charged rather than cargo rates. It is a fact, I understand, that the port of Vancouver is the only port at which cargo rates are charged.

Mr. LANGLOIS: When you say cargo rates do you mean dockage or top wharfage?

Mr. MERRITT: I understand it to be a rate on cargo by tonnage, passing through the port, whereas in all other ports payment is made as a dockage charge, which I understand to be a payment for the use of the facilities of the port.

Mr. LANGLOIS: We have that in Montreal, too.

Mr. REID: We have cargo rates at New Westminster.

Mr. MERRITT: I have some figures here of cargo rates in Vancouver, unfortunately only for 1944. Cargo rates for that year were \$470,000 as against the 1945 figure for Montreal—I have not the comparable 1944 figure—of \$394,000, and, for Halifax, of \$310,000.

[Mr. Chevrier.]

Mr. CHEVRIER: The average cargo rate for Vancouver per year is \$442,000.

Mr. MERRITT: I would point out that by charging these cargo rates apparently one arrives at a greater amount than by charging dockage rates in other ports.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Yes, if you compare dockage with cargo. But that is not the only thing which enters into the structure of cargo rates. It is a complicated matter which would take some time to explain. However, there are a number of items which enter into the picture, and by comparison, when the totality of the changes is studied I do not think it can be said that the rates for one port are greater than those of another.

Mr. MERRITT: While that may or may not be so—and I have no personal knowledge of it, so that I shall accept the minister's word—when we compare totals paid, the amount paid by vessels using the port of Vancouver, or by people bringing cargoes into or taking them out of that port, seems to be much higher than that paid in Montreal which, I will admit, is at least an equal port.

Then, it seems to me that this question of capitalization and refunding would be handled much more to the satisfaction of the people of Vancouver if the local advisory board were set up. If in Vancouver we knew that these matters were being handled for us by an advisory board which would have more influence than a port manager might ever have, then I am sure the minister would find his task much easier when he deals with complaints about conditions which exist out there.

The last thing I wish to say is that, although the new Lapointe pier may have been given as a present to the harbour commissioners of Vancouver, the material I have seems to suggest that the valuation of the other large pier, namely the Ballantyne pier, is so high one authority has estimated that if its sheds were filled for 365 days in the year it would not derive a revenue sufficient to provide a decent return on the capital invested in it.

I feel sure that if we did not have this feeling of remote control, and which we consider has worked against our interests, not only in this but in many other matters, the people would be much more satisfied with the port situation as they find it at the present time.

Mr. LANGLOIS: I should like to keep the record straight in connection with harbour dues. I do not know what the hon. member who just took his seat had in mind, because it would seem that he was using different terms from what we use in eastern Canada. But let me say that we pay harbour dues for the