

centre of their activities. They are certainly the centre of their economies.

There is one clause in the bill which gives me some concern; it is the proposition to set up a fee structure under which small fishermen would pay for the use of these harbours. I hope a close look will be taken in committee at this proposal. As hon. members know, most of the fishermen on the Atlantic coast today find a great deal of difficulty in eking out a livelihood from the resources and markets available to them, without being hit by additional fees. I would, therefore, not be in favour of making small, part-time fishermen pay fees at the various wharfs they use.

I also wish to address myself briefly to the proposal to replace the wharfingers, who are now in charge of many of these small craft harbours, by harbour managers. I have no objection to this, as long as the harbour managers come from the local community and are familiar with the needs of the local community and of the people who use the harbours. We do not need so-called experts being transferred to these communities when they know absolutely nothing about the problems or the needs of the people there. I should like to see some form of consultation introduced with the local fishermen with respect to the appointment of wharfingers or harbour managers. I want to see these harbours managed for the benefit of the people who use them, and not by paper-pushers who are more concerned with filing reports than with making facilities readily available.

We have heard criticism as to the timing of this bill. Members have asked why it should be brought forward at this particular point. I would ask a counter question: Why not? It is time there was rationalization of the development of these fishing harbours. Many of them are too small now for the purpose for which they are needed. Also, it is time we gave thought to the nature of the development which is required. In addition, I would hope that as a result of this bill we would continue to attach greater significance, at least from a financial point of view, to those harbours which are used by people for the purpose of making a livelihood rather than for the purpose of pleasure.

I am not downgrading the place of pleasure craft or of small craft harbours in the development of tourism. Indeed, in my area there is a group at work trying to develop a marina both for local use and for the promotion of tourism. I support this effort, but I insist that the fishermen whose lives are completely dependent upon the resources of the sea and upon the related shore facilities must come first in the financial considerations of the department. I have no worries about this as long as the present minister continues to hold his portfolio. He has shown a lively interest in the well-being of the fishermen, and he has done a great deal in a relatively short period to improve their lot. I encourage him in this attitude and look forward to the day when we shall see a rational system of small craft harbours both for pleasure craft and for those who use the sea to make their livelihood.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, I had not originally planned to enter the debate, but the hon.

Fishing and Recreational Harbours

member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) did ask a question. Looking through the bill, I find I have five or six points which I should like to make—hopefully, in brief fashion. First, and perhaps most important in my mind from a general standpoint, I think something should be written into the bill to require a separate report on its administration each year by the minister responsible. I believe such a provision has been included in other bills of this kind. It might be regarded as implicit that the minister should include this information somewhere in his annual report, but I do not think it would hurt to give a little backing to this measure and to the important thing which it does by having a report made by the minister. This could be arranged in committee. As a matter of fact, I shall try to get on that committee so that I can pursue the matter myself.

The second point is a constituency one. I look at the potentialities of a series of beautiful little ports along the coast of my constituency—Herring Cove, Portuguese Cove, Catch Harbour, Sambro—all of which qualify for what is intended under this act. But there is clause 3 of the bill which provides that the bill will not affect any harbour, wharf, pier or breakwater under the jurisdiction of the National Harbours Board or any harbour commission established under any act of parliament. This might rule out help for these four communities, either because the definition of the port of Halifax could be so large as to include them, or else the operations of the harbour commission could be such as to include them as well.

● (1250)

Perhaps the adviser to the minister, who is in the gallery, would make a point of doing some homework, which I obviously cannot do this morning since I just started to read the bill, to find out from the National Harbours Board or the Department of Transport what the situation is in that respect. It would mean that the four small communities I have mentioned would not have their day in the sun under this legislation.

Another point which I think is of concern is that “the minister” is not defined in the bill. There is a provision at the bottom of the first page which states that the “minister” means such member of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada as is designated by the governor in council to act as the minister for the purposes of this act. It seems to me to be a strange provision to have there. After all, the bill is in the name of the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc) and presumably that hon. gentleman would be carrying out the legislation. He might find there is conflict with clause 3(b) which would prevent the minister named to carry out this bill from ever being an acting minister of anything else. I throw that out as a legal technicality, not of any great moment. But I think the act would look a little brighter if the minister responsible for it could be set out there, and I do not see any reason why he cannot.

The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich has questioned the regulatory powers set out in the legislation. It is quite common to have such regulatory powers in any piece of legislation that goes through the House. The hon. member who spoke follow-