

Motions

I will deal with the situation in Atlantic Canada because it is the area which I know better. It has something over 30,000 fishing vessels and over 59,000 fishermen. The landed value is over \$1 billion. Activity in the fishing industry will increase with time, over coming years. The effect of free trade alone will increase the need for more wharfs and more facilities because the value-added aspect will be greater in our communities. We will not need to send unprocessed fish to the United States to be used in TV dinners, foods, and so on. The value-added aspect will occur right here in Canada, which will increase the need for safer and better harbours all that much more.

We have valuable fishing grounds in Atlantic Canada, such as Georges Bank, the Scotian Shelf, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Grand Banks, and so on. These areas will become veritable gold-mines for the citizens of Canada.

Yesterday morning I was able to take advantage of the new Small Craft Harbours program. I was able to visit some of the important fishing communities in my riding and to announce very much needed improvement programs for small craft harbours at Dennis Point in West Pubnico, Lower East Pubnico, and Camp Cove in Argyle. A couple of months ago I was finally able to announce improvements for the Saulnierville wharf in Saulnierville, Nova Scotia. Over 20 years ago the wharf had been built and suffered damage in a storm but had never been repaired. I might add that this wharf was ranked third in landings in the whole Scotia-Fundy region of Canada.

For the benefit of the novice, the Scotia-Fundy region of Atlantic Canada is the largest fishing area in the world. After 20 years we now have a program to start doing repairs which are very much needed.

Under the program, in my own riding alone I have been able to announce projects in Little River in Digby County, Little River in Yarmouth County, Cape St. Mary, East Ferry, and Delap's Cove. These communities needed good, safe, and efficient harbours.

Returning to the committee, as I noted earlier it met over a number of months. It pointed out some problems. The first was inadequate funding. It also pointed out our concern for the safety of fishermen and their materials and equipment which, as I noted a moment ago, can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Storms over the years had caused damage on wharfs which had never been repaired.

The committee came up with the following recommendation:

Your Committee therefore recommends that budgetary and corresponding program actions be taken to assure access to harbour users and their property, and to ensure the economical and timely upkeep of the harbours and the extension of their useful lives. The budgetary or program actions should be consistent with and appropriate for a program involving valuable long-term capital assets.

• (1150)

On June 29, the Minister did announce a program which met all the requirements of the request we had put forward. To respond to the very cynical comment made by the previous speaker to the effect that officials had not wanted to do this, that was not so. It was because, up until this time, we had not had the leadership that would allow us to respond to those requirements.

The program announced by the Minister calls for a management plan for fishing in recreational harbours maintained under Small Craft Harbours. The new management strategy responds extremely positively to our recommendations.

As I have already noted, the question of safety, both for fishermen and their vessels, came first. As well, there has been disruption caused by unsafe harbours, harbours which had not been dredged and harbours which were simply not adequate to respond to the needs of the industry. On the Atlantic coast of Canada alone, \$5 million worth of damage had been caused by storms. High water levels on Lakes Superior, Huron and Erie had caused damage estimated at \$10 million. These were problems that needed to be addressed.

Over the years there had been an imprecise targeting, as mentioned by the previous speaker. Many wharfs were repaired based on political considerations. This had to be stopped. We must respond to the fishermen and their needs rather than to political needs. That is what this program addresses.

Resources were spread too thinly, and I will note the figures later on. There were simply not enough dollars going into the program. When talking about harbours across Canada, we are talking about billions of dollars worth of harbours with which we needed to deal.

The expansion of funding for small craft harbour maintenance and improvement budgets responds much more fully now to the needs of harbour users and is particularly targeted at those involved in commercial fishing. Priorities have been aimed at safety and the elimination of disruption, and in the process, in order to get proper input, there will be more involvement at the local level of the users themselves. Those people who wish to become more involved in the planning of programs for harbours will receive first and better consideration.

The program is comprised of measures dealing with four main areas. First, there will be more effective management of existing small craft harbours. Structures at harbours which have had to be barricaded because they have become hazardous will be reopened. There is nothing that upsets a fisherman more than to see a barricade placed over a harbour which in the past the fisherman was able to use. There is nothing either that is more upsetting to people like me.

As I noted earlier, repairs of storm damage in Atlantic Canada and the upper Great Lakes will be carried out and there will be new infrastructure projects, services and facilities