

Prince Rupert Harbour

The National Harbours Board will continue to support and pursue other initiatives that anticipate the development of bulk handling and general cargo facilities in the port of Prince Rupert. Provision has been made in the board's 1972-73 estimates for a \$5 million expenditure at this port.

I think the House will also be interested in knowing that the National Harbours Board has opened a business office in Winnipeg to serve western Canadian requirements. The growth in grain, bulk commodity and general cargo movements is such that full co-ordination of transportation and transshipment facilities is essential. It is anticipated that the new office will contribute to the establishing of more efficient traffic flows through the ports of Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Churchill and Thunder Bay.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House welcome this announcement, but we wonder why it has taken so long—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Horner: —to recognize Prince Rupert. We are fully aware that the Prime Minister made a trip to the Pacific rim countries some years ago and more or less suggested that trade should pick up with that area. Prince Rupert is far closer to Japan and China than is Vancouver and therefore it is the natural port from which to ship to those countries.

We will reserve our final judgment on the government and the expenditure until we see how the government goes about it. A few years ago funds were allotted to the department for the development of the port of Vancouver under the National Harbours Board, but the board did not use all of the allotted moneys for that port. Whether the \$5 million for Prince Rupert will be spent in the right manner is hard to determine at this time. There are only two wharves at Prince Rupert, only one of which handles grain. Also, there is the so-called surge problem at the port. We hope that some money will be allocated to correct this problem, and we certainly hope that the grain handling facilities will be enlarged.

The minister suggests that bulk handling and general cargo facilities should be improved. We certainly agree they should be because ships must be able to come into Prince Rupert with a cargo and also leave the port with a cargo. Part of the difficulty has been in getting ships with cargoes to come to Prince Rupert. Access by rail to Edmonton and the northern parts of the prairie region is far shorter from Prince Rupert and therefore we have always looked upon Prince Rupert as a valuable port which should be developed.

We welcome this initial step by the government and we will watch the expenditures carefully to make certain that this port proves to be the tremendous asset it could be, particularly to the grain economy in the northern parts of the Prairies as well as the whole prairie region.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I will refrain from mentioning the difficulties which we had in trying to get the grain storage facilities at Prince Rupert doubled between 1958 and 1962.

[Mr. Jamieson.]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Howard (Skeena): We have been awaiting this announcement not just for months, as might appear to be the case, but ever since 1919 when the late Mackenzie King visited Prince Rupert and made these commitments. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, this matter has been in the minds of everybody in Prince Rupert and the surrounding area for a long period of time, and certainly this is a welcome announcement on the part of the minister. We look forward to the establishment of the port authority itself, the involvement of the National Harbours Board, and the development of the port for obvious reasons that are clear to everyone, namely, shipments in and out of the port of Prince Rupert, particularly of grain, thus helping to relieve the pressure on other ports and other parts of the country.

Up until now Mr. Bill Raithie, a member for the National Harbours Board, has acted as liaison between the federal government and the provincial government with respect to the transfer of land. I would hope, with all respect to Mr. Raithie, that he would have a minimum of involvement in whatever happens in the city of Prince Rupert from the National Harbours Board point of view. He is chairman of the Vancouver Port Authority, and I believe that his interests are mainly directed there and that he should not have too much involvement with Prince Rupert for that reason.

In the establishment of the Port of Prince Rupert authority I hope the minister would go beyond the boundaries of the city and include persons from the organized community of Port Edward.

I do not know what the minister means by a major, modern grain transshipment facility at Prince Rupert. At the present time there is a storage capacity there of 2½ million bushels, or a little less. I would suggest that he, the National Harbours Board, or whoever is going to do this work, should be thinking at least in terms of a storage capacity of 10 million bushels and the installation of a tipple system so that boxcars can move in loaded with clean grain and be unloaded rapidly with a minimum of difficulty, thus making maximum use of the port.

This will also mean, I hope, increased use of the Canadian National facilities running in and out of the port of Prince Rupert. If that is the case—in fact, even without increased use of Canadian National facilities—I think that Canadian National, in conjunction with the province of British Columbia if they can work out an agreement or by itself if they cannot, should move into the installation of snowsheds along the lower reaches of the Skeena River. At this time of year and earlier in the winter there are periods of a week, ten days and sometimes up to two weeks when there is no rail movement in and out of that area because of snow slides. Snowsheds would help to alleviate that problem.

I would not like to see this port when it is developed, used simply as an exit port for raw materials or nearly raw materials. The more we continue to export raw materials out of the nation the more we export jobs with them and the more we provide jobs to people in manufacturing industries in other countries. I would rather see us expand our own manufacturing industries, process raw