

Government Orders

compared to the cost of food in the urban areas. It is shipped there by marine transport or air freight. For years they have asked for a roll-on, roll-off facility for trucks and trailers. It would have cut the cost of living in those communities enormously. It was completely ignored by the Department of Transport.

The failure to develop those harbours on a continuing basis means that they were given a 75-year life span. The rumour is that under this government the ministry intends to abandon these harbours after they wear out completely. In abandoning them, it hopes the private sector or the communities that depend on them will pick up the capital costs and operating cost. If they want a harbour they can simply put it in themselves. Well that is not going to happen. It is going to create an enormous problem on the coast because the cost of living is too high. The ability to maintain the local economy when the infrastructure is removed just is impossible. In the more inhabited area, we find large government injections of cash into airports and highway systems. In the smaller communities, that injection of cash is not there and, simply, it says that they cannot continue to exist.

• (1830)

It is my hope that the minister will stand up and comment that this abandonment within the next 15 to 20 years will not occur, that in fact the government has a harbour renovation program, and that they will continue to own and maintain those.

I would point to a couple of examples where people want to become locally involved but there is no mechanism by which it is permitted. Zeballos recently had their harbour burn down and it totally removed that area from their local economy. What is needed is a sharing. The community wants to get involved with the Government of Canada and the Department of Transport to help build a wharf. The original projection was about \$1 million and it looked as if that were an impossible task for the government to deal with. The community came forward to say let it develop a wharf in which it could pay half the cost by pouring in rock and preparing the site and have the government simply build a wharf head.

It has been hoping for an early response to a citizen-community initiative to save the taxpayers of Canada money, but that has not been forthcoming. Here is an opportunity for the minister to become involved with

community planning and to cut in half, literally, the cost to Canadians.

Kyuquot is an interesting example of the same type of thing. In Kyuquot the harbours are littered with garbage. The federal government has basically said that it is not interested in those wharves. Certainly it owns the capital facility, but it is not going to put in enough money to operate it. Places such as Kyuquot and Fair Harbour are littered with garbage. It is ironic that in Fair Harbour this year the garbage heaps were so incredible that bears became a threat to people using the wharves.

We really need some assistance here, and I hope the minister tonight has not abandoned those wharves and main elements to the community facility, but will indeed get involved with the people of Zeballos, Kyuquot and Fair Harbour.

In Alert Bay, the Nimpkish band needs that transportation for its fishing fleet which is the main core of the community. The government seemed interested in building harbours, renovating harbours and upgrading harbours anywhere but in Alert Bay for the Nimpkish Indian band. There was some token spending there that basically placed capital facilities in place, but it was not adequate to protect them. They have worn and deteriorated substantially.

I hope the minister is prepared to go there or to send officials to Alert Bay to say that the government is willing to work with them to bring the facilities up to standard. It has not happened for years, and it is extremely important that it does.

In Gibsons, British Columbia, again, there is the move toward privatization, the move toward abandoning government responsibility for public infrastructure, and essentially trying to throw off the responsibility for these very important public utilities to the local community and to the private sector.

There was a great furore during the last election. The breakwater at Gibsons was in a situation where there could at times be substantial wind damage occurring to the fleet tied up there. There was a need for a breakwater. A great big blue sign appeared and the government said it would fix this facility up for the people if they would just vote for it in the next election. Ultimately, nothing happened. It just simply carried on.