

Island, and certainly in my constituency and as well in the constituency of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni. In many cases these wharves are the only places in the community where wharfage facilities are available.

Our complaint is with reference to the commercial fishermen, who, when they return from fishing, must tie up their boats at the wharf after they have unloaded their cargo. It is not a matter of shopping around. If they do not like the schedule of fees they cannot go somewhere else. Whatever fee is charged, that is what they have to pay. If there is no protection and if there is a private entrepreneur, the charge can be exorbitant. The fisherman has no choice but to pay, or do what one or two of the fishermen in my constituency have done, and that is to berth their boats at a wharf a long distance away and drive back and forth. That seems to me totally unfair.

There could be some provision in this legislation to ensure that if the government is going to lease out wharves which have been built by the taxpayers of this country to a private entrepreneur, then either there be some review board with respect to the fees to be charged to those who want to tie up their boats at a wharf, or the right of appeal to some review body who could ensure the fisherman is not being taken advantage of.

As a matter of fact I have watched, in the last ten to 12 years, a steady attempt by the government to avoid its responsibilities with respect to these small harbours. At one time these small harbours were run almost entirely by the government. Little by little the government has been endeavouring to push the responsibility onto someone else, lease out the wharves to someone else, get some municipality to take over the job. I can give the minister a few examples.

• (1432)

In 1968 when we were just into a by-election campaign in my constituency, the then minister of public works, the Hon. Arthur Laing, came to the town of Chemainus where, for years, they had been pointing out that when a storm came from a certain direction, many of their boats were wrecked. They badly needed a breakwater. He agreed that a breakwater would be built. That was a firm commitment.

When I became the member for this constituency, I took it up with him. It was confirmed that the government had agreed to put up a breakwater. Then the government decided to change its policy. The change in policy was that the government would build the breakwater providing the municipality would spend an equal amount putting in marina facilities.

That municipality stretches a long way from the ocean. To ask them to put up \$1½ million in marina facilities to make it possible to provide a service which up to that time the federal government had been providing, was a sure way to ensure they did not have to build that breakwater. In fact, they never did build it. The town of Chemainus has no way by which it can raise sufficient money to match the cost of building that breakwater.

Fishing and Recreational Harbours

I give the minister an example of the obverse side of that problem. In Cowichan Bay in my constituency they also need a breakwater. They have a serious difficulty when storms come from a certain direction. They applied for a breakwater. The argument presented to them was that since all the operators there are private entrepreneurs, they must put up the same amount of money in marina facilities as the government will spend on the breakwater.

The point is their marina facilities are in first class shape. Most of them have been built in recent years. On what would they spend three quarters of a million dollars? Painting them? They do not need more facilities. They need protection. However, under this so-called small ports and recreational harbours policy, the government has found a means by which it can avoid its responsibility. The people there are told that unless they spend three quarters of a million dollars doing renovations to their facilities which are not required, the government is not prepared to put in the breakwater.

For a long time the government has needed a clear-cut policy with regard to small craft harbours. I do not lay the entire blame on the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc). In fact, he has probably tried harder than any of his predecessors to get some money so that he can enunciate a policy. However, he has not been able to get it. The result is that the policy is largely a paper policy.

Both the hon. member for Comox-Alberni and the hon. member for Niagara Falls told the House that by debating this legislation, we were preventing many people from getting additional wharves and berths where they could tie up their boats. There is nothing in this legislation which provides for one single wharf or for providing any berthage accommodation.

This legislation provides for shared programs which are dependent upon the provincial government, the municipality or some private entrepreneurs putting up money if the federal government puts up money. If the federal government's allocation of money for small craft harbours is as limited as it has been for the past ten or 12 years, none of those wharves will be built and none of that accommodation will be provided.

This is just an attempt to kid the public, saying that by passing this legislation they will get wharves and accommodation for boats of fishermen and recreational boats. There is no guarantee that is going to happen. It will only happen if money is provided in the estimates and certainly there is no indication so far that money in the quantities required will be provided.

The government has the responsibility with regard to commercial fishermen on both the east coast and the west coast. For anyone who thinks they are getting a free ride, I point out that these fishermen pay income tax and other taxes just like the rest of us. They pay very large sums for their fishing licences for which, by the way, sports fishermen on the west coast do not pay. The commercial fishermen must pay \$1,000, \$2,000 or more for their licences to catch fish.

When they come back from their fishing expeditions, surely they have a right to a place to tie up their boats at a