

Government Orders

I might also add that on all sheep and pigs shipped from the port there was a fee not exceeding one-quarter of one cent per head.

These housekeeping amendments will also validate tariffs of fees and charges fixed in later years which could not conform to these archaic provisions.

The over-all results of these amendments will be to make the operations of the port wardens more effective and responsive to modern day shipping at the local level, while maintaining the government's responsibility for the safety of commercial navigation.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that you will find that this bill can receive timely approval in order to modernize this small but important part of the daily business of these two ports.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in my place on behalf of my Liberal colleagues to speak on Bill C-82, which as the parliamentary secretary to the minister just enunciated, is a housekeeping bill that essentially permits the port wardens at the ports of Montreal and Quebec City to establish the tariffs of fees charged to shipping companies for services rendered.

It used to be that the government, through an Order in Council, allotted these fees. As well, the legislation before us removes the ceiling from the fees that were charged the various shipping companies for a variety of services.

For instance, section 10 of the act is to provide for the appointment of a port warden for the harbour of Quebec. It says that the person assisting the port warden and the survey of damaged vessels shall be paid a maximum fee of \$5 for services rendered.

Obviously a good case and a good argument can be made that it is time those fees enter the 20th century.

The concept of the port warden, however, is one that goes back to an old adage of the British system. In fact, I believe that the only port wardens in the country are those currently in Quebec City and Montreal.

Essentially, the wardens at the present moment and as contemplated in this bill, are employees of the local boards of trade. The boards of trade are made up of representatives from the various shipping entities.

As I see it there are three responsibilities for the port warden: first, his role to survey the port authority; second, to act as an ombudsman in dealing with dispute and hopefully tendering resolutions to those disputes; and third, to collect all fees and charges for those services.

In 1989, for example, the board of trade in the metropolitan city of Quebec City collected some \$65,000 in that fiscal year for the various services rendered. From that amount, the salary of the port warden and for the chairman of the board of trade are paid.

It is important to suggest that the port wardens will still continue to be appointed by the federal government, and that in fact, while the port warden will respond and report directly to the board of trade, these port wardens have to make an annual submission of the audit independently of those services during that year.

I believe that it would be fair to say that the fees have to be modernized. Judging from the antiquated levels of these fees, we can expect tremendous increases of anywhere up to 500 to 1,000 per cent. While we are speaking of relatively small amounts when it come to the various shipping entities, I think there is no doubt that this will add a further cost to the shipping entities who use the port facilities.

I believe it would be fair to say that if the fees were in isolation I do not believe it would be a big, serious problem for most shipping companies. I think it is going to be compounded possibly by the fees that may be charged in connection with the Coast Guard, for instance. Some shipping companies now get services from the Coast Guard. They may be asked in the coming year, depending on the consultations of my good friend, the minister, to pay additional fees for the use of the Coast Guard services.

It is part of the government's cost recovery program. It may anticipate revenues of upwards of \$25 million. Over half of those revenues, namely \$14 million, could possibly be raised in the province of Quebec at the two ports of which we speak today.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, you can see the added burden on shipping companies. As well, the report submitted to the minister concerning preventive medicine and shipping spills obviously will add another investment layer to the shipping entities themselves with respect to having the ultimate respect for the environment. There are going to be a series of possible increases to the various shipping entities. The government should be accountable as protector of that industry, and be able to intervene