

Motions

Vancouver, an area equally densely populated, but populated by poor people, immigrants, and by the working class. In the riding of Vancouver East we now have the transfer point for dangerous goods. In the view of many workers on the waterfront, the manner in which it was transferred was not well done. It is still an extremely explosive situation, which I mean literally, because it is the place where dangerous cargo comes in on the railways, and by trucks. There have been some very bad chemical spills in that area. The chemicals are transferred to plane to go to Vancouver Island, they are transferred on to barges and boats in the Port of Vancouver.

It is critical that this planning go forward. At the time the Minister indicated the federal Government would assist with this, to ensure that there is logical planning for the transfer point, and certainly it should be in a less densely populated area. Where municipalities are not represented on those consultative bodies, how are things like that achieved?

If I may be so bold, it is also very important that the transport committee take another look at the development of our ports. I noticed in the report that there is a small section on ports. The committee was impressed with developments in the Port of London where all the lands are being redeveloped around the port. I remember seeing that myself, and it is most impressive. The committee was also impressed with Amsterdam, which has a very effective port. There was a port manager in Vancouver who had formerly been at the Amsterdam port. That port has a very aggressive marketing procedure which is very much needed. I tend to think that sometimes the container clause was the scapegoat for everything that the port was not doing in trying to promote marketing itself. In Amsterdam there has been noted growth and commercial success. There were also some interesting comments on compulsory pilotage services.

The reason I ask if the transport committee would consider looking at the whole port development is because it has been a number of years, probably four or five, since the harbours board went out of existence and Transport Canada was born with its children that were supposed to be autonomous, namely, the local port corporations. I would like to know if the original goal of autonomy is being achieved effectively. I sometimes wonder about it. On a number of matters in which I have been involved, it is very difficult to get local decisions. What progress has this meant to the operation of the port itself?

I would particularly like to raise the question of the responsibility of a federal Government Crown corporation, in this case the Vancouver Port Corporation, to the surrounding municipalities and communities. There is an extremely arrogant attitude. One does not even receive answers to letters when one represents constituents on matters of concern. We have a right to expect answers and some response from the port authorities.

I can think of an example in Vancouver East which involved MLAs, myself as the MP, and a senior cabinet Minister, the

Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney). It involved the incidence of a large garbage scow which serves the cruise ships that operate in that port, incidentally as a result of federal developments and the new cruise ship facilities. Why on earth do the large garbage scows need to be located below a residential area, causing very bad pollution for the neighbourhood both from smells and air pollution? It is scandalous that a port manager who is a Crown corporation employee has paid absolutely no attention to submissions by the community. The City of Vancouver cannot organize a meeting or receive a response from him. MPs, and indeed the senior Member from B.C., seem to have no influence for co-ordination in solving this problem.

My final point, on which I do not have a lot of information, and perhaps my hon. colleague who is on the transport committee may have some information, is that I recall the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly), who is very interested in transportation matters, being concerned about the Vancouver airport and the need for another runway there. The Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River is a pilot and flies into Vancouver airport. I mention that again because it is something of local concern.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to raise those somewhat parochial concerns but concerns which also have relevance to our country.

Mr. Belsher: I listened attentively to the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) speaking to the motion about adopting the report of the transport committee tabled in the House on December 4. While the Hon. Member raised some very interesting points, perhaps she strayed somewhat from the subject at hand. Nevertheless the Hon. Member did raise some very important points on which I would like to respond. When she talked about the letter from Vancouver which was in support of the Federation of Municipalities to the standing committee on Bill C-105 which is dealing with safety within rail transportation, she did raise a very important point.

● (1350)

I want to assure the Hon. Member that we are listening very carefully and with a sympathetic ear to what the municipalities are saying to us. I do not know whether she is aware of the fact that the representatives of the City of New Westminster came to make a presentation to the committee, as did representatives of the City of Regina and a number of other municipalities such as Chilliwack, Abbotsford, and Hope. Other areas in the Fraser Valley have lent their support to the submissions that have come before us.

The Hon. Member raises a point about dangerous goods. A great many people are thinking that they should be moved out to the Fraser Valley. I want to be very careful as to where the dangerous goods should be handled. Whether or not they should be handled out in Matsqui or down in Fraser Valley East will have to be looked at carefully. It is easier for me to