

A practical problem can be exemplified by the situation of the Fraser River Harbour Commission. The physical boundaries of this commission encompass five federal electoral districts including Burnaby-Richmond-Delta, Surrey-White Rock, New Westminster, Fraser Valley East and Fraser Valley West; and nine municipalities including Richmond, Delta, Surrey, New Westminster, Coquitlam, Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Langley and the city of Port Coquitlam. To campaign effectively through nine municipalities is no easy task and the question arises: could justice be done in the election campaign of potential harbour commissioners? At present the appointment of two commissioners by agreement of the nine municipalities is working quite satisfactorily in the local interest.

On the business side, the harbour commissioners conform by legislation and policy to the whole concept of paid operation on a businesslike, self-sufficient financial basis. It is most essential therefore that businessmen of proven successful experience be appointed to the positions thus ensuring, in so far as possible, conformity with the national transportation policy.

The proposed bill should also be considered in the light of the work currently being conducted by the National Ports Council. The council is composed of the members of the National Harbours Board, the chairmen of the ten local port authorities of the National Harbours Board ports, the chairmen of the ten harbour commissions, the senior officials of the Ministry of Transport responsible for harbours and ports, and representatives of each provincial government and of certain other federal government departments. The council was set up to advise the Minister of Transport on matters relating to the improvement of port and harbour economies and structures and related maritime matters.

The first meeting of the council was held in September, 1972, and a second meeting was held in March, 1973. At that time, one of the major items under discussion related to ways and means of creating an instrument which would permit Canada's ports and harbours to function harmoniously within one structure. It was felt that possibly this could be achieved by bringing together all of the larger ports under a new single national network, under a new act that would encompass the best features of the National Harbours Board Act and the Harbour Commissions Act without disturbing the operation or administration of the existing harbour commissions. It was recommended that a review of the organization of Canada's ports and harbours should be undertaken, and in response the minister announced such a review some time ago.

The third meeting of the National Ports Council was held on October 10 of this year. At that meeting position papers were submitted by the harbour commissions and by the National Harbours Board local port authorities setting forth their views on a format for a harbour administration structure for Canada at the local, regional and national levels. Provincial representatives have also been asked to submit their views, and it is our intention to seek a melding of the various views into the position which was announced last spring after the second meeting.

What I have been saying, Mr. Speaker, is intended as a basic statement in opposition to the bill. There is other material which could be made available and that might be

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useful to answer other questions which hon. members may have. The ports and harbours of Canada comprise 25 large multi-purpose ports, some 300 smaller ports, and several hundred wharves on the east coast, the Great Lakes, the west coast, in the Arctic, and on interior lakes and rivers.

The administration of Canadian ports is generally under the Ministry of Transport's marine transportation administration which I mentioned a while ago, and which was formed in 1970. Canada's harbours are subdivided into National Harbours Board ports, harbour commissions, public harbours, and government wharves. The governing legislation in this field comprises the following acts: the Canada Shipping Act, Part XII, the Government Harbours and Piers Act, the Harbour Commissions Act 1964, the individual harbour commissioners acts for the harbours of Toronto, Hamilton, Belleville, Winnipeg and St. Boniface, North Fraser and Port Alberni, the National Harbours Board Act 1936, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act. To outline each of these would take some time, and it is not my intention to do so at present.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I regret I have to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired. He can continue only with the unanimous agreement of the House.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Question.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Charles Turner (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the harbour commission system of harbour administration has prevailed in Canada in various forms dating from the pre-Confederation period. Existing acts of incorporation go back to 1911, but several new commissions have been incorporated within the past ten years. Traditionally each commission had its own individual act of incorporation, but in 1964 parliament passed the standard Harbour Commissions Act under which commissions may be established by order in council. Five commissions have been re-incorporated under this standard act and it is anticipated that others will follow in due course, thus leading to greater uniformity in the governing legislation.

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A harbour commission operates through a set of bylaws made by the commissioners under the authority of their act and approved by the governor in council. These bylaws replace the harbour and wharf regulations which formerly applied when harbours were administered directly by the department. The bylaws vary according to the particular needs of the harbour, but basically they are designed to control traffic, to establish a schedule of rates and charges and to provide generally for the management of the harbour.

A harbour commission constitutes a largely autonomous body subject only to general guidance through the ministry of transport. A commission is free to engage staff as required to carry out the purposes of its act, but the new act of 1964 gives the minister of transport the right to approve the salary of the chief executive officer. Generally, their acts authorize commissions to purchase lands and to construct and operate wharves and other harbour