

it is my duty to interrupt proceedings on this bill in order that the House may resume debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

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SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from Thursday, October 22, consideration of the motion of Mr. Jacques-L. Trudel for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): I wish to continue the remarks I started last night, Mr. Speaker. When the proceedings were interrupted at ten o'clock, I was intending to speak about the importance of marine resources to the Atlantic area. I intend to be a bit parochial in the few minutes remaining to me because this is one of the few opportunities a member has to speak about matters which affect his constituency.

• (3:00 p.m.)

I want to talk particularly about wharves and harbours in my area. Last year the estimates of the Department of Public Works never came before the House for consideration; they never came before the committee, either. The Committee on National Resources and Public Works, which normally studies these estimates, was bogged down by legislation having to do with the pollution of our waters and no questions could be asked on the estimates of the Department of Public Works. As I said last night, my area is heavily dependent upon fisheries and marine resources. Perhaps I should say it used to be dependent, Mr. Speaker, because right now the situation is very serious. This applies to the whole of Nova Scotia—in fact, to all the Atlantic provinces.

I represent a most beautiful part of Canada. The people down there are intelligent, they are tough, they are strong, they are industrious. Moreover, they are independent; they do not ask for much from the government. They do not care about all these highfalutin' buildings.

Mr. McBride: Is that why they sent you here?

Mr. Comeau: They sent me here because I care about their problems. I might add that they do not care much for partisan interruptions, either. They ask only for what is due to them. But they know what is going on. They see, they hear, they listen and they read about money which is being spent on different government projects, money they sometimes consider is being wasted though they cannot get a nickel from the government to repair a wharf so that they can tie up their boats. There is hardly a fishing village I have visited where people did not complain about the condition of their harbour or their wharf.

In the past two years I have received hundreds of letters asking for repairs, dredging or new construction

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to be undertaken. In some cases I have been successful and there have been improvements. But not enough has been done. Remember, the people in my riding depend heavily upon harbour facilities without which they cannot berth their boats or carry on their fishing enterprises. Every time I make an inquiry, the engineers in the Department of Public Works go to my riding, investigate and make a report. The reports are always favourable, Mr. Speaker. I feel the engineers do a good job. Then the report reaches Ottawa, the minister takes out his big axe, and goodbye, wharf; goodbye, dredging!

Coming from British Columbia, the minister does not understand the need. He does not understand that we experience high tides and seas varying up to 30 feet. He does not understand that we need sturdy facilities unlike those little floating docks they have on the British Columbia coast. He does not understand that good harbours are the basis of the economy of my riding and, for that matter, the economy of all the Atlantic provinces.

Two years ago I made it clear to the minister that I have in my riding 25 per cent of the harbours and wharves in the whole province of Nova Scotia. This is why my file on public works is growing bigger and bigger all the time. I do not know how many wharves I have inquired about; it is becoming ridiculous—Yarmouth Bar, Stoney Island, Camp Cove, Cape St. Mary, Church Point, Comeauville, Delap's Cove, Digby, Freeport, Ingomar, Lower East Pubnico, Meteghan, New Edinburgh, Newellton, Pinkney's Point, Sandy Cove and Whale Cove, Saulnierville—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boulanger: Change cars; all aboard!

Mr. Comeau: I could go on and name them all. I make no apology for referring to these matters because this is one of the few opportunities we have to do so. Last year the government took away from Parliament the right to study the estimates of this department. There are many other areas in which there is urgent need for wharf maintenance and harbour repair: West Head, Wood's Harbour, Yarmouth Harbour, Abbott's Harbour, Shag Harbour, Annapolis—

Mr. McBride: There are too many.

Mr. Comeau: Yes, there are probably too many. In response to my requests I was told that the government intended to concentrate its efforts in building two or three extremely good harbours. I said: Fine; you come up with the good harbours and then I will listen. Yarmouth was supposed to have one of these good harbours, yet only the other day the papers came out with the headline: "Critical Yarmouth Wharfage Situation". What has the department been doing in the past three years? If it had built these harbours I would not be inquiring into all these things today. This situation makes one mad.

In Yarmouth we have two ferries, one going to Bar Harbour, a daily run, and the other, the *Prince of Fundy*, going to Portland, Maine, bringing in between 1,000 and 1,200 tourists a day in the summer season. The situation