

*Government Orders*

This absolutely critical service cannot be replaced by conventional ships. The travelling public is put in tremendous jeopardy with the removal of that simply because the government wants two of them in Vancouver. It does not want to provide effective search and rescue services to the people on the northern part of Georgia Strait, a tremendously populous area, with a tremendous number of people on the water.

The people providing this service are extremely demoralized because of the continuation of the cuts. These cuts are not only demoralizing on the Public Service, creating enormous problems in gaining from it the kind of support it is capable of giving but they are also presenting an enormous danger to the travelling public.

Another example of these cutbacks is the removal of two Coast Guard vessels from the coast of British Columbia. We had been promised a major improvement in the ships on the coast of British Columbia to provide offshore protection to upgrade the aids to the navigation program and the lighthouse servicing program but how did this government handle that? It decided to take the two vessels that would have fit the bill, the *George R. Parkes* and the *Martha L. Black* to Quebec.

What did the government do? It gave us in return an old beater by the name of the *Norman McLeod Rogers* which is tied up because it is full of asbestos. I guess no decision has been made whether the government is going to spend the money to clean that ship out even if it is not appropriate for the kinds of tasks for which we need it.

Obviously the Minister of Transport has made some decisions that really affect the Public Service on the coast of British Columbia and the conditions of work in an asbestos-ridden ship. It is a difficult situation. We should have proper ship equipment there so that people can carry out the kinds of tasks for which they have been trained and the experience they have to deliver to the public.

However, at the same time these cutbacks are occurring. The ship program with the Coast Guard on the west coast is abysmal. The *Narwhal* which is an old buoy tender really is not an acceptable vessel for outside

search and rescue on the Pacific Ocean but that is its function now that the main resources have been taken away and sent to Quebec.

It is interesting in the area of aviation. Because of privatization people are booted out of their jobs in the Public Service in order to give them to the private sector. It is often so that friends of the Conservative government can benefit from a position at the public trough.

• (1615)

There is a lot of talk now that the flight service stations are going to be privatized and they are looking at a proposal to take Transport Canada employees and turn over those flight service station positions to privatization. They of course went through a number of cutbacks which again created demoralization in the Public Service. To my way of thinking, this is really a tragic situation. We need quality service aimed at safety for British Columbians who must travel in difficult areas and this government seems not to care that there is an arbitrary rule to do those cutbacks in spite of the consequences.

The other thing is the Coast Guard helicopters. Again, friends of the Conservative government come along and make a suggestion saying: "Wouldn't it be great if we privatized and took over the operation of Coast Guard helicopter services". The employees who fly and service those helicopters are extremely concerned about their future. There is an uncertainty involved with this wrong-headed approach.

What happens is if you are out doing a medical evacuation or you are doing search and rescue work, the bottom line is the bottom line. If a private company has it then you get to a situation where it will say: "Well, maybe we will not do the kind of upgrading that is needed, we will not do the kind of training that is needed and we will not put on the equipment that is needed". The thing then begins to fall down.

They can also work it the other way, and this has been happening in many departments where you get a cost plus situation, where friends of the government move in, a very lucrative contract has been obtained and they virtually work at cost plus.