

Routine Proceedings

regulatory regime, cut red tape and allow for faster, more efficient business decisions.

Canada's public ports will be commercialized using consistent criteria applied equitably coast to coast to coast. Ports that are important to domestic and international trade will make up the national ports system. They will be transferred to financially self-sufficient Canada port authorities made up of representatives nominated by port users and governments.

Community organizations and private interests will be given the responsibility for operating regional and local ports. Provincial governments and municipal authorities may become involved if they wish. The maintenance of designated remote ports will continue to be ensured by the Government of Canada. The government will pursue commercialization of the operations of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway system.

Whether through the establishment of a new not-for-profit corporation or through changes within the current management structure, it is the intention to make the seaway a more efficient and effective transportation system. The government will move aggressively to full cost recovery.

The government will commercialize the delivery of ferry services. Marine Atlantic will be directed to substantially reduce its costs and increase efficiency. The corporation will explore new vessel management and procurement practices. It will take steps to streamline services and match the operating season of its vessels to realistic traffic demand.

The government will review the subsidies it provides to private ferry operators. I want to emphasize that the Government of Canada will respect all of its constitutional obligations in this area. Remote and essential ferry services will be maintained.

It is the intention to modernize the marine pilotage system. The four pilotage authorities have been directed to prepare detailed cost reduction plans. Those plans are expected to be on my desk by the end of this month. Pilotage authorities will be required to fulfil their mandate of self-sufficiency. Cost recovery for pilotage services will be 100 per cent in every region of the country where they operate. Pilotage tariffs must reflect market conditions and appropriate costs.

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The four pilotage authorities have been directed to review the designation of compulsory pilotage areas, the process for licensing pilots and granting pilotage authorities and certificates, the criteria under which vessels may be exempted from pilotage requirements and the feasibility of new training courses to prepare more candidates for their pilot licence or pilotage

certificate exam. Revisions to the Pilotage Act will be made once these reviews and consultations have been completed.

[Translation]

All of these changes will have an impact on federal employees. The government will make every effort to ensure that employees are treated fairly and equitably.

The national marine policy will ensure that Canada has the modern marine transportation system it needs to compete worldwide.

It will bring commercial discipline and business principles to the management of Canada's ports, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system, as well as to ferry and pilotage services. It will maintain the federal government's constitutional obligations—as well as its commitment to marine safety and environmental protection.

It will help to ensure that shippers have access to efficient and affordable marine transportation. That those who use our marine system pay a greater share of the costs. Services levels will reflect realistic demands. Users who will pay will have more say.

And for those honourable members who have been calling for greater local control, we have responded through the changes outlined today.

I want to thank all those who participated in helping us put this policy together. In particular, I want to thank the honourable member for Hamilton West, Mr. Keyes, and the members of the standing committee on transport which he chairs. The standing committee's cross-Canada consultations earlier this year, as well as its comprehensive report on the marine sector, proved invaluable to the development of the national marine policy.

Canadians depend on marine transportation. The measures I have outlined today will help ensure a safe, efficient, affordable and integrated marine system that meets the needs of Canadians as we move into the 21st century, where there will be the toughest competition in the marketplace Canadians have ever had to face.

Mr. Michel Guimond (Beauport—Montmorency—Orléans, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to rise in the House today to comment on the marine policy tabled by the Minister of Transport.

The minister started his speech with a retrospective of his initiatives during the past two years. In many cases, they did not quite come off. The principle was fine, and it was to provide Canadians and Quebecers with a transportation system that would be less costly and more responsive to user needs. However, the way the minister proceeded with these reforms was so awkward that it caused major problems within the transportation system, especially in the case of regional transportation.