

Motions

At least the Government has moved a fraction of an inch forward in recognizing that there has been, as the Government puts it very euphemistically, an imprecise targeting of the upkeep program. Resources are very thinly spread. That is quite a statement. The results of it fall on the previous Government which used these harbours as political plums wherever it could. Yet it did not provide the maintenance budget to ensure that those harbours were kept functional for the communities which depend on them. Indeed, they do depend on them. There was a complete under-budgeting for maintenance of important federal assets, the small craft harbours system. As a result, it is being damaged even further because the necessary repairs to maintain the integrity of those facilities was not done.

Stating that the resources were spread too thin and that the targeting was imprecise is an admission of the Government's negligence in its trusteeship of important Canadian resources. The need, the Government claims, is for expanded funding for small craft harbours, improved maintenance and project improvements. There is no doubt about that. There needs to be a substantial increase in facilities.

The nature of fishing is changing on the West Coast, for example. On the West Coast we have a large and active commercial fleet. We have two types of action that require servicing by the federal Government in small craft harbours. We need fishing ports in the fishing grounds so that vessels can moor during times when the fishing season is closed. They need places where they can moor in order to unload at processing facilities. They need places to moor and to seek security during storms when fishing cannot continue.

I point to the example of Port Hardy where we have had 900 vessels tied up at one time, with nowhere near that number of berths. During periods of storm such berthing causes damage to vessels. There is not proper garbage facilities or servicing facilities in the harbour environment and garbage is thrown overboard. There is tremendous environmental degradation. What has happened as a result of the actions of management regimes, and in this case in the Johnstone Strait fisheries, Fisheries and Harbours, through their Small Craft Harbour arm, have not kept pace with the need for additional harbour facilities.

The Government of Canada and, indeed, the Government of British Columbia have actively encouraged the development of aquaculture which is part of the fishing industry. There are many people who are absolutely appalled at the completely unplanned approach of both governments to aquaculture. They are appalled at the fact that foreign investors are allowed almost more priority than Canadian entrepreneurs in the industry. They are appalled that upland owners of property adjacent to fish farms and those with fish licences are given no say in the location of those particular facilities. Nevertheless, that industry is in place and growing rapidly.

The Government of Canada is making no movement to service that industry. This is definitely a function of Small

Craft Harbours. In many areas, especially on the northern and central coasts where licences and fish farms are selling rapidly, places away from major centres, the only movement of goods and people back and forth to those facilities is through Government of Canada wharves and small craft harbours.

Of course, the Government of Canada is doing nothing to develop those facilities. There needs to be a definite facility at Sultry Bay on the Sunshine Coast in the area of Powell River. What the Government of Canada is saying is that it has two agencies, the Small Craft Harbour agency under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the coast guard facility under the Coast Guard, which handles wharves and piers for the purposes of moving goods and people.

Small Craft Harbours says that its mandate is exclusively related to the tying up of fishing vessels. Therefore aquaculture is falling between the two, because Transport Canada says that it concerns fishing and Small Craft Harbours says that it concerns the movement of goods and people. What they are both saying is that neither one is responsible.

What is happening is that there is no planning for the federal Government to service the aquaculture industry and to ensure that these infrastructure resources come onstream in a time that is useful to the industry and to facilitate its growth. There is no provision for the safe movement of goods and people back and forth to the sites where the work is going on. Nor is there a method for moving the product in such a way that it will come ashore in top quality condition for the market to which it is destined. This is a serious failing. Communities like Port McNeill have appealed to the federal Government to examine the sites and develop them in order that the aquaculture industry developing on the northern end of Vancouver Island and along the central coast can develop in an orderly and effective manner. To this point, the Government has no plans on the drawing board to service that industry.

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In the area of Jervis Inlet, an appeal has been made by the Powell River Regional District, by the Municipality of Powell River, and the aquaculture industry in the area to get moving on an acceptable dock where goods and people can move freely. Again the Government is stating that it is the other Department's responsibility, and it is falling right through the crack. The long-term losers are the communities that hope to benefit from that industry and, of course, the industry itself that does not have an effective area to move its goods and people back and forth safely, quickly, and effectively with no degradation of the product involved.

It is important, because for those areas that do have aquaculture potential, one of the major things is the federal Government infrastructure. This is absolutely imperative for communities on the west coast of Vancouver Island that have a large number of licences put into place. People are stating that those licences and the aquaculture sites cannot be developed until there is some assurance that there will be infrastructure;