

Government Orders

If we had that \$500 million on the coast of British Columbia for things like economic development, proper housing, and proper transportation, the people living in the communities of Ocean Falls, Bella Coola, Bella Bella, Klemtu, and Shearwater would have a basically decent life. From the signals we receive from the present Conservative government it is not likely that any consideration will be given to those people during their term of office.

It is my hope that they will be able to move ahead. At Klemtu there is an important project to put an airport in there. The cost of servicing that community with food, other items, and passenger transportation by float plane costs an arm and a leg. Several of the airline companies have asked that this government consider putting a fixed-wing strip in there so that they can provide the community with freight and transportation at a much cheaper rate. So far nothing. Hopefully the government will come forward and provide an opportunity to create a co-ordinated coastal transportation system.

This government is closing down the lighthouses. I do not know what coastal shipping and coastal aviation is going to do. Several years ago when this issue came up there was a huge uproar about automating the lighthouses.

• (1710)

They said: "Yes, we recognize that it is the wrong-headed thing to do. The safety of coastal shipping depends on that". They said: "We will upgrade it. We will give them hourly weather reports. We will give them radio communications and we will enhance the services provided by those lighthouses".

Every transportation medium said: "We need them. They are a safety element". What did they do? They have now come back with a proposal where the public is not involved. They will try to shut them down again to save a few lousy bucks that will put in jeopardy the lives and the transportation safety of the system in British Columbia.

Second, they are now starting to close down remote communication outlets in such areas as Bella Coola and Ocean Falls. You need to have those remote communication outlets. They are saying: "They are not used enough". That is because they are used in an emergency. They are there when you cannot communicate with anybody else.

What these guys sitting on the government benches, the Conservative Party members, are prepared to do is to say when people are in emergency, when there is an aircraft or ship in difficulty and they need a Medivac: "Sorry, it costs a few dollars to keep that remote communications outlet open. We are going to shut it down".

It is time that stopped. That is part of the coastal shipping operation. That is part of the coastal transportation and the safety of the people who live and work there, of the Indian communities in the area. It is absolutely a right of those people to have a decent system of transportation and decent safety.

They are now closing down transportation beacons along the coast. One individual was saying that it is now getting more and more dangerous to fly up and down the coast of B.C. He was describing one operation he was involved in, transferring from Vancouver to Alaska the baggage that had been left from the cruise ships that go up and down.

It turned into quite a nice little business for the airline to bid on, but they said they are now closing down non-directional beacons and radio navigation equipment along the coast of B.C. I do not know what we are talking about when we say "coastal shipping". There is not going to be anything for these people to work with.

Again, the member for Gander—Grand Falls turns around and rightly informs the public and the House that they are now going to start charging user fees for the navigation system, for buoys and things along that line. That is absolutely ludicrous. Of course, they have been trying very hard to get a user fee system involved in getting weather services to save people's lives by getting good weather reports.

They are going to charge people for that. People are not going to use it because it will cut costs. Everybody wants to sharpen the pencil. Someone is going to venture out into bad weather and kill a whole shipload of people or an aircraft full of people.

It is not only in the marine sector where they are trying to impose the user fees. It is in the air side as well. It is time to stop this wrong-headed approach. Nobody puts a toll on the Trans-Canada Highway that the federal government helped to build, and the provincial governments maintain the highway system in the provinces.