

area. Each community is competing with each other for harbour facilities. There is a completely irrational development of facilities. There has been no general study of the needs. The community which happens to have the most effective appointed commission receives the largest amount of investment and development in many cases. This situation arises for unnecessary reasons.

I suggest what we need first is a rationalization in respect of port studies on the Pacific coast. This is something we have not had until now. My hon. friend's bill will raise this issue again. Second, we must have input from the environmental groups and from groups interested in recreation on the river. So, I am very pleased to rise in support of the bill. I would urge my friends across the aisle not to talk out this bill because to do so would be a disservice to the people of my community and all communities which have harbours in the province of British Columbia.

Mr. Joseph-Phillippe Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say, first of all, that the remarks of the hon. member who presented the bill could have far-reaching effects. When we discussed the bill introduced by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), as I said in this House on April 13, 1973, I felt that if we were to start enacting legislation in respect of each harbour commission across this country possibly we would not be granting a particular favour to anyone. I suggested that we should have national legislation dealing with all harbour commissions rather than do it on a piece-meal basis.

At that time I mentioned that we were open for suggestions from members of this House. So far there has been very little reaction other than this bill. Canada's major multipurpose harbours are under the general supervision of the Ministry of Transport. I should like to name some of these harbours. They include Belleville, Fraser River, Hamilton, Lakehead, Nanaimo, North Fraser, Oshawa, Port Alberni, Toronto and Windsor. In addition, there is a historic commission, 1912, which exists at Winnipeg-St. Boniface for river control.

I believe we ought not to forget all those smaller areas I have mentioned. Traditionally each commission had its own individual act of incorporation—Toronto, Hamilton and North Fraser for example—dating from the 1911-1913 period. But in 1964 Parliament passed the Harbour Commissions Act. A great number of difficulties related to the individual acts. The 1964 act provides uniform controls. This is really what I referred to at the beginning of my comments. It provides uniform control over such matters as revenues, expenditures, borrowing and financial matters in general. It also encourages active participation and local initiative in port promotion and development planning. To date, five commissions have been re-incorporated under this standard act, these being Fraser River, Lakehead, Nanaimo, Oshawa and Windsor.

As a general statement, the commissioners are responsible for the development, administration, promotion operation and maintenance of the harbour, and for maintaining a close liaison with the Ministry of Transport and with regional and local interests which they serve. The commissioners are local residents, prominent businessmen interested in local harbour affairs and the development of the

port. Are we then saying that those who are presently serving on the harbour commissions are not qualified as the hon. member who presented the bill is suggesting? Their appointment is considered to be more in the nature of a director of a corporation and as such may be paid an honorarium from the harbour revenues in an amount approved by the governor in council.

•(1710)

Opposition to this bill falls into several categories and degrees of importance, the most serious of which is the effect on the control over the harbour and its functions by the federal government, in particular the Ministry of Transport. The 1964 act authorizes commissions to purchase lands, to construct and operate wharves and other harbour works. The commissioners administer federal harbour lands, wharves and other facilities which have been transferred to them by order in council, together with any municipal or provincial harbour lands transferred to their control. The commissions also have various monetary powers, expropriation rights and other related powers with degrees of control exercised by the governor in council.

The federal government has a vested interest in the harbours administered by the 1964 act, and this interest has been entrusted to the commissioners. Because the federal government has a statutory responsibility for navigation and shipping and the harbours and ports designed to service the marine transportation industry, it is felt that the powers and authority to appoint federal representatives cannot be abdicated.

A harbour commission is formed if certain basic requirements are met, these being, first, local initiative to promote the harbour; second, local willingness to contribute harbour front property; third, significant interests for long term development, and fourth, sufficient harbour revenues to support a separate administration.

If these conditions are met, a change from direct Ministry of Transport administration under the government Harbours and Piers Act and the Canada Shipping Act to administration by a harbour commission may be considered. Commissions are established, therefore, to carry out a function which otherwise would be carried out directly by the Ministry of Transport, and thus there is a delegation of authority by the ministry. Accordingly, federal appointees on a harbour commission are considered to be necessary components of the administrative function of a harbour commission, and under no circumstances should this federal element be deleted. This is the point that should be stressed most strongly in rejecting Bill C-39.

An argument against Bill C-39 can also be formulated on the basis of the federal interest in transportation. The marine administration of the Ministry of Transport is obligated to provide safe and efficient facilities and services in support of water-borne commerce and marine operations. In view of this goal, the federal government has provided a wide variety of ports and harbours, main line channels and canals, navigation aids, ice-breaking services, and the like. These facilities and services are, of course, utilized by ships of all nations. The five harbours which are administered under the 1964 Harbour Commissions Act are no exception.