

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

• (10:00 p.m.)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES—BRITISH COLUMBIA—REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT OF WHARFAGE REGULATIONS

Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgil) in replying to the question I raise will use the eloquence and fervour demonstrated by the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Cashin). The minister will recall that I previously raised with him the matter of the wharfage regulations which are under the jurisdiction of his department. For some reason or other *Hansard* keeps listing wharfage under the title of fisheries. However, I am sure the minister recognizes this is not a matter that he can fob off on his colleague from New Brunswick. Doubtless his colleague has reason enough to be concerned.

First of all I would like to remind the minister that when I last raised this matter on November 18 he said he was looking into it and he expected to continue looking into it for some time as it was in his view a very tangled situation. I am certainly not catching him unaware with this question and, indeed, on September 17, 1964 he had something to say on this matter in reply to some remarks which were addressed to him on that date. He said he had a good deal of sympathy with some of the matters that I raised at that time. I might remind him that he said the following, as recorded on page 8160 of *Hansard*:

It was perhaps not the most auspicious part of my beginning as Minister of Transport, that just before I began there was a complete overhaul of these wharfage charges. This did create the impression in my own constituency that my first act as Minister of Transport was to charge more for the use of wharves, which, perhaps if I had control of the timing, might have been done a little differently. However, I think the hon. gentleman can be pretty sure that on this subject I will tend to be on the side of the users of the wharves, just as far as one can and still have some regard for the public interest.

At any rate, the regulations with regard to wharves are not in my view, as the laws of the Medes and Persians, but are subject to change almost without notice if I can think of any good reason for changing them.

The other day I received a note from the minister's office which referred me to the fact that the wharfage regulations brought in by order in council P.C. 1964-104, to which the minister referred at that time, are still the

[Mr. Cashin.]

wharfage regulations with which we have to deal now. In my view the minister, if his sympathies lie on the side of the wharfage users, has had a lot of time to think things over and to investigate the situation. I want to make it clear that the time is long pass when we should have had a more satisfactory situation.

I know that I cannot repeat the speech I made to the minister in 1964. I will immediately proceed to mention one or two letters which I have received from my constituents, particularly in reference to the situation at Comox at the present time, which I think illustrate the sad state of affairs. One of my constituents wrote the following:

I am one of a handful of fishermen at Comox being sued in Exchequer Court for non-payment of wharfage charges.

I object strongly to paying anything until all government floats in B.C. and on the Atlantic and inland waters are doing likewise.

Comox floats are below the standard of many others. Lights only on one float; one water outlet for the two floats; no electric outlets; the piling and plank breakwater leaves much to be desired. Many boats are damaged throughout the winter. There is no supervision. Little putter boats are scattered along both floats. You can't tie alongside them and they are so spaced that you cannot get a berth between them. Children run around at will day and night. The charges for my boat, a 34 foot gillnetter at 2 cents a foot per day runs to over \$20 a month. I have just received a bill for October. Fifteen days for \$10.20. It could just as well have been 30 days, as I am day fishing out of Comox and was tied up there every night that month. These charges are far out of line for the services provided. There are many government floats in this area. Why is it that the one next to us, the one next to it, the one next to it and the one next to it have no charges? My tax dollars helped pay for all these floats. Why is it that I have to put my hand in my other pocket to pay wharfage charges at Comox? There are many boat owners at Comox that have never been billed.

If this act cannot be administered fairly it is a bad piece of legislation and should be done away with. For in this great land of ours, where all are to be treated equal, a mess like this leaves me a bit befuddled.

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, from what the minister said the other day he is a bit befuddled. Nevertheless, I think that is an honest, truthful letter and the kind which deserves serious consideration. I have before me another letter which says:

It is with the utmost concern as a commercial troller fishing out of Comox that I regard recent government action concerning wharfage bills issued to me, and I feel it most necessary that you as our member of parliament should be fully aware of the intolerable situation here.

These bills have been issued to a few, charging us outrageous rates, when we, for such, are offered nothing adequate to our needs.