

## Adjournment Debate

The initial problem arose because of the fact that there was no minister of fisheries, all harbours were under the authority of the Department of Transport, and there was very little knowledge of the basic operation of a fishing port vested in any of the individuals in that department.

It was agreed some time ago that the ports which fishermen used would be transferred to the Department of the Environment. At that time there was some complaint that the fishermen were being charged wharfage fees at the wharves on a rather discriminatory basis. Perhaps the reason for the discrimination may be found, first, in the fashion in which the wharfingers are appointed, which is by political appointment, and second, in the fashion in which they are paid.

I should like to quote from *Hansard* of May 23, 1973, at page 4008, which gives the scale of pay received by wharfingers:

● (2220)

Wharfingers receive annual remuneration for their services on a commission or percentage basis. They are paid a portion of the wharfage tolls and dues collected for the use of the wharf at the following rates: 100 per cent of the first \$100 collected; 90 per cent of the next \$300 collected; 50 per cent of the next \$300 collected; 25 per cent of the next \$1,800 collected; 15 per cent of the next \$13,500 collected and 5 per cent of any remainder.

It becomes very obvious that there is an element of incentive for a wharfinger to collect up to a point and up to a point only, but this would seem to lead to the fact that the charges laid by the fishermen are that some boats are charged wharfage at a particular wharf while others are not. It seems to be on a rather selective basis. It seems that when the ports were transferred to the Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc) this matter would be taken into proper consideration and the habit would stop, but only last week I was called by fishermen who said that their boats were now impounded, that customs and immigration were ordered by some official in Ottawa not to grant permission for these boats to make calls at American ports. It so happens that their livelihood depends upon their calls to the American ports. These fishermen have been rather obstinate about this charge because it is not charged to all, or charged equally to any.

This is not the first time this subject has been raised. It was raised on April 5, 1973, when a group of fishermen made calls on the minister and on his officials in Ottawa. They were invited to appear before the committee of the environment. The subject of wharfage was mentioned there, and the fishermen presented themselves through their president, Mr. Savage who said:

While you are on the subject of breakwaters, the subject of wharfage should be mentioned. They have put a wharfage tax on us which was picked up, I understand, from the west coast and they took from that something they thought they should force on us without considering what it would amount to in our particular area, but it is there and you have to have it and you have to live with it.

The complaint is not so much that there is a wharfage charge but that it is charged in a discriminatory fashion. There are certain areas of the coast of Canada where fishermen have never heard of wharfage charges. There are other areas where a fisherman cannot dock without a wharfage charge. The inconsistency is not fair to the fishermen of either area.

The transfer of these harbours has been a long and tortuous subject. For instance the subject was first brought up in February of 1973 when the then parliamentary secretary said that it was going to happen right away, that there had been 2,163 harbours recommended for transfer to the Department of the Environment. The matter was later raised by the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall), and when he asked the question on July 24, 1973, he was told there would be an answer given next week. "There will be an answer next week," said the then parliamentary secretary to the minister of the environment, "as to when they will be transferred." A statement came out stating that they had been transferred on August 1, 1973. That was quite a long week.

The matter of wharfage is still not settled. It is still not being checked on an over-all basis. It is still being checked on a discriminatory and selective basis, and fishermen are now denied their livelihoods by virtue of the fact that they cannot pass freely on waters which they have fished for years.

I have a list of harbours which have been transferred in the province of New Brunswick, which includes Carleton-Charlotte, my constituency. Among those which have remained—and I say remained in the hands of the Department of Transport—are several harbours here, one of which is used as a fishermen's harbour. It also contains a ferry wharf which is perhaps properly now in the hands of MOT, but the fishermen's wharf is still under the MOT and also subject to wharfage, according to the list.

My plea is that the word of the then minister of the environment, that this matter would be resolved, should be kept by this government. He is now no longer in the House, but he spoke to those fishermen who visited here and said if he could possibly arrange matters it would be waived, and a new policy would later be announced and be brought into effect. When does that new policy come? When will the collection of wharfage be waived? When will they let the fishermen go free?

**Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc) has asked me to reply and to indicate his appreciation to the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain) for his concern. Wharfage fees are being assessed and applied as required by law under the Government Harbours and Piers Act in respect to wharves administered by both the Department of Transport and the Minister of State for Fisheries in those locations where wharfingers are appointed.

The former minister of fisheries, recognizing the deficiencies of the current legislation to cope adequately with the many problems faced by the fishermen, received approval to prepare new legislation which would provide for improved harbour services and a more equitable fee structure.

Extensive discussions have been held during the past year in all regions across the country to obtain the views of fishermen and provincial governments and other interested parties. As a result the proposed legislation is now in an advanced stage of drafting and should be available shortly for introduction to the House. The new legislation will afford the Minister of State in charge of Fisheries the