

Motions

program which was announced in June of this year in the small craft harbour area.

It is interesting to note that the Government now deemed that there was a substantial need for small craft harbours. It seems to have forgotten the old sins of the previous Government in creating too many harbours and the need to shut them all down. It now finds there is an need for safe accessible harbours. The Government also said there was a very strong need to emphasize repair and improvement to ensure there was safety in those harbours, that someone did not drive a forklift out on the wharf in a small craft harbour in winter time and fall through it with the forklift; to determine that there was not such rot and decay in those harbours that one could not work on the harbour facility.

The Government said another need was to ensure that there was not disruption in the commercial fishing activity. There are communities like Port Hardy with a very limited number of berths available in the small craft harbour area. Because of this poor management by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, if a storm suddenly came roaring in, there could be up to 900 major commercial fishing vessels trying to tie up in a community where there was no moorage facilities, or very few, and creating a grave danger to the fishing vessels. The beach and the very small harbour facilities are then littered with garbage, vessels are tied to each other for mooring security, and the disruption to the commercial fishing service is incredibly apparent. Small Craft Harbours and the Government of Canada have seen a need to build facilities to ensure that there is not a disruption in service.

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Many, harbours in Atlantic Canada have received extensive damage from storms. The Government was told of this time and time again. Those harbours need to be dredged and to have the storm damage repaired. Communities were paralyzed because the people could not get out to fish. They could not get out to earn a living. They could not safely moor their vessels, the tools which they use to earn their livings.

Surprise of surprises; the Government has now discovered that the dredging and the storm damage repair in Atlantic Canada can be done with the very paltry amount of \$5 million, a figure which certainly understates the case. I think this represents the Government's failure to come to grips with the needed level of improvement in those Atlantic Canadian communities.

There must be an enhancement of that improvement. There must be a steady and ongoing allocation of resources to ensure that the damages are repaired in a quick and timely manner and that the dredging goes on on a regular basis. Those harbours in Atlantic Canada must be maintained so that people can continue to earn their livings safely without disruption.

As stated in the government program, the needs are correct. But what is required, something which is lacking, is the repair

of the storm damage and the implementation of the dredging programs in a timely manner so that further disruptions do not occur.

In the Great Lakes region the Government recognizes that high waters in those lakes have damaged a substantial number of harbours. It is being proposed that the damage level is at around \$10 million. The harbours must be repaired in order to ensure the integrity of local economies. Because the damage was not repaired as it occurred it has cost the taxpayers a great deal more money. That is unfortunate. The dislocation which has occurred to local economies because of the failure of the Government to keep in place its infrastructure, which structure maintains and supports the local economy, has not only cost the taxpayers of Canada more money in terms of federal dollars but has also created major dislocations in the tourism and recreational sectors of those economies.

These measures must be carried out without causing the enormous disruptions we saw with the three-year program of the Government that turned a blind eye on these facilities under the guise of instituting savings. These are false savings and in the long run the taxpayers will pay a lot more.

One advantage the Government feels may accrue to it is, that if it suddenly stops spending money on small craft harbours, the damage which occurs can be repaired during an election period. What has happened on those occasions is that the Government has attempted to put itself forward as recognizing the needs of people and as attempting to buy votes during an election period. This is the manner in which the activity we are faced with today has occurred. Instead of regular and thoughtful prioritized activity to fix storm damage, to repair facilities and to ensure federal support for communities both in Atlantic Canada and in the Great Lakes region, we have the situation of simply stopping all progress to try to make false savings. Then during an election period the Government opens the purse strings and tries to spend money effectively and as rapidly as possible in the hopes of buying a few votes.

That does not work. It creates a very poor contracting, repair and building regime. Often the contracts are let with the next Government trying to put them in place. The process is done in a very unplanned and generally unacceptable manner.

One of the things the Government says is wrong with the previous approach is the imprecise targeting of the upkeep program on these harbours. That is absolutely true. What we see is a situation in which the loudest voices receive the treatment. There is no effective prioritization. Therefore, someone who happens to come along with the same party card as the Government in power will say, "We want our wharf fixed". When that happens, and when moderate problems in an area with very low utilization caused by major damage or major need for infrastructure are ignored, then instead of winding up where it should, the money goes to serve the needs of citizens. This seems to be politically expedient, and then the program has to start.