

*Fishing and Recreational Harbours*

each ten or 20 communities on the coastline. That proposal was socially unacceptable. Nevertheless, the Department of Fisheries in the past ten years has been instrumental in implementing this proposal as part of the policy of the government. What has been the result? One finds, for example, that large ships cannot enter Victoria Harbour because it has been neglected. The government has not said it will abandon the port. It denies any such suggestion, but its design is insidious. I want people in the Ottawa offices of the department to know they are causing unnecessary hardship for our fishermen along the coasts of Canada.

Let me tell the House of the effect of certain regulations. I am thinking of certain economic opportunities relating to fish landings. Mr. Speaker, in one instance the department recently recommended that no DREE grant be given to a certain area because no fish were landed in that particular area. Technically, the ministry was right: fish were not landed there. Why? The reason was there was no processor to receive them. But fishermen brought in the fish which were sold as salt or smoked fish. When someone wanted to enlarge the operation to process the fish the fishermen had brought in for themselves, it was held that no fish were landed in that area, and therefore the Department of Fisheries recommended that no DREE grant should be made available.

Mr. Speaker, fish processing facilities have been established near that point along our coast. By virtue of the regulations, without any consideration whatsoever for the health of the consumer of that product, the ceiling was too low, the vats were too shallow, and they were not properly vented. One processor after another spent his means improving his facilities, only to find that a further regulation made him still inoperable. He could not continue to function. The regulations which came out of Ottawa with regard to the fishing and processing industry have been utterly and completely without any awareness of the facts of life along our shores.

● (1640)

In one harbour in my constituency in the last three years there were three prospective plans for the improvement of that harbour by construction of a breakwater. One was totally unacceptable to the fishermen, one would have been of moderate help to the fishermen, and one would have made a beautiful harbour out of that location. The one that was totally unacceptable was not built. The one that was partially acceptable was built. Fishermen are still suffering, while expecting protection from the construction of that combination pier-breakwater.

I submit there is little justification for the present allocation of public funds as it relates to the maintenance, replacement and improvement of fishing harbour facilities along our coasts. The bill before us offers very little hope that there will be any particular change.

I would first like to deal with the appointment of the wharfinger as mentioned in clause 4. The collection of wharfage fees from fishermen and small boat owners has been the subject of very serious contention. It has been a point of

conflict between fishermen and the department for quite some time. So that it will sound more authentic, I wish to quote the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Anderson) as he spoke in the fisheries committee on February 28, 1975:

—on the west coast of British Columbia we have different sorts of harbour facilities. Some have wharfage managers, some have not. Although these wharves are built by the federal government through federal funds, because of the fact that some of these wharves are isolated and are only used at certain times of the year, we do not put someone on them.

I will not bore the House by reading a quarter of a page of a committee report, but the hon. member went on to say that the wharfage fees are collected in some ports on the coast of British Columbia, not collected in others, and that it is a discriminatory policy as far as the government of Canada is concerned. It must be authentic, because the hon. member for Comox-Alberni does not belong to an opposition party. I wish to quote from the proceedings of the Fisheries committee of March 4, 1975. In recognition of the remarks of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni, the minister, in the introductory remarks to his estimates, said:

I believe the hon. member for Comox-Alberni referred to the discrepancy of wharfinger and harbour fees collected from some fishermen and not from others. I should explain that the new act relating to the development and use of fishing harbours and marine facilities is in the course of preparation by the small craft harbours branch of the fisheries and marine service.

That was the promise of the minister. The minister, prior to the 1974 election, promised the House that wharfinger fees would be levied and assessed on a basis which was fair to all users of all port facilities. He promised he would put an end to the argument by the fishermen that if they docked at port A the wharfinger caught them; if they docked at port B, the wharfinger did not catch them; and that fisherman X never paid wharfage fees no matter where he docked. That may sound difficult to believe. However, in answer to a question by myself on November 17, 1976, among the facts given to me was the statement that 1,128 facilities have no wharfingers. That means that in 1,128 ports along the east coast of Canada no wharfage fee is collected from those who use the facilities. From the answer of the minister I find it extremely difficult to understand how a government can impose charges on some who use the facilities, and totally ignore the rest. It is not fair.

The question was also asked as to how a wharfinger is paid. For the information of those who may not know, the first \$100 which the man collects is his. he keeps 90 per cent of the next \$300, 50 per cent of the next \$300, 25 per cent of the next \$1,800, 15 per cent of the next \$13,500 and 5 per cent of the remainder. This means that of the first \$2,500 collected, the wharfinger keeps \$970. From that point on there is very little incentive for him to do any further work. This seems to be the pattern of work performed by wharfingers. They collect a little and they quit shortly thereafter. I abhor this system of charges. We have had the word of the minister that this will be corrected. We presently have a bill before us in which no correction is made. It is discrimination in a vile form.

I ask that the parliamentary secretary inform the minister in the strongest possible words that the hon. member for Comox-Alberni and members from the east coast of Canada ask that