

Motions

To the Standing Committee on Research, Science and Technology Science and Technology, Votes 1c, 5c, 10c, 15c and 20c.

To the Standing Committee on Secretary of State

Secretary of State, Votes 1c and 5c (excluding portions dealing with multiculturalism) and votes 10c and 30c.

To the Standing Committee on Transport

Transport, Votes 2c, 10c, 25c, 35c and 40c.

To the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs

Veterans Affairs, Votes 1c and 26c.

Motion agreed to.

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STRIKING

CONCURRENCE IN FORTY-THIRD REPORT OF STRIKING COMMITTEE

Mr. Scott Fennell (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I should like at this time to move that the forty-third report of the Striking Committee presented earlier this day be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

CONCURRENCE IN SECOND REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find there is unanimous consent for the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly) to move the Motion standing in the name of the Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly) with respect to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: By consent, the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly) for the Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly) will move the motion.

Mr. Ray Skelly (for Mr. Manly) moved:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, presented to the House on Friday, June 19, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to speak to an issue as important as the small craft harbour issue. The subject, of course, of the debate today revolves around concurrence in a report by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans with respect to an inquiry into the small craft harbour situation in Canada.

The Government, of course, manages a large number of harbours across Canada. There are some 1,415 commercial harbours and something in the order of 840 recreational harbours. In the management of that program there have been many serious concerns about the operations. In response to those concerns, the Government, when it first came to power, began with a policy that would be judged by many Canadians as less than desirable.

The Government in a very rigorous attempt to cut back federal spending, and to cut back on the number of people involved in the public service, essentially froze activity in this important area. In the freezing of this activity the Government made the statement that it was all the fault of the previous Government that the small craft harbour arrangements were in chaos, and that the previous Government had assigned resources to small craft harbours in Canada on a political basis and had created far more harbours than Canada needed and certainly far more than the Government of Canada was able to maintain.

The Government used this as a justification to shut down many small craft harbours, but said it would do it on a prioritization basis. Those harbours which were now deemed to be under utilized and in a very degraded state of disrepair would be simply barricaded off and closed. Other harbours not important in the minds of the Government would not undergo extensive repairs to bring them up to the standard required by fishing communities across Canada. The Government had a further category of harbours that would in fact undergo regular maintenance and repair and be considered for later upgrading of facilities. Then, of course, there is the need for new facilities.

This was essentially a continuation of the restraint program that involved the cutting of staff and budgets as per the overall policy of this particular Government. This policy caused an enormous amount distress. This distress was reflected back to Members of Parliament and in turn to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and, of course, to the Minister.

The political pressure rose to the point where the standing committee felt it absolutely had to do something in terms of an inquiry into the impact of the Government's restraint position, the cutting of staff and budgets; that came about because government Members in the Conservative Party were under such tremendous flack in their own areas. Their own constituencies were rising up against them and threatening to defeat them in the next election if this issue was not addressed. There was pressure on the Minister, pressure on the Government and pressure on sitting Members in the Conservative Party. As a result, they then were prepared to undertake an examination of this matter through the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

When the examination was complete, the findings were that the program was inadequate. The Government also found there was enormous pressure, and it put in place a new