

Government Orders

Mr. Speaker, did you ever think you would see the day when you had to pay to use buoys in the water? This government is introducing a policy and I am sure that we can make sure that the NDP gets a copy of this so that they too can see what this federal government is doing to shipping.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, this bill is an important piece of legislation before the House this afternoon. It is important to discuss the transportation policy of this government in relation to second reading of this bill.

The thing that I would like to make a couple of points on is basically the deprivation that this government has created in a rational transportation system along the coast of British Columbia. I am sure my colleague from Gander—Grand Falls concurs in the same dilemma that is faced by rural communities, coastal communities in Labrador and Newfoundland. We get a situation where it would be nice to have any kind of a coastal vessel that provided rational transportation.

There is a community where the Heiltsuk Indian band lives at Bella Bella of about 1,700 people, a community that has been there more than 12,000 years. It is likely going to be there another 12,000. They need one thing to make their community work, an absolutely critical thing. They need a roll-on, roll-off ramp so they can connect to barges that come in and connect to the B.C. ferry. That would reduce the cost of food in that community about 600 per cent. It would reduce the cost of building materials 600 per cent or more. It would reduce the cost of moving an automobile or a pick-up truck that is needed in a community like that or construction equipment about 600 per cent, from \$600 down to probably less than \$100.

This government absolutely refuses. It will talk about coastal shipping but it will not talk about the infrastructure needed to get that coastal shipping, passengers and freight into those communities.

• (1700)

At Bella Bella it is absolutely critical that this government provide the infrastructure to deal with coastal

shipping. A roll-on, roll-off facility is needed there and it is absolutely crucial.

It is interesting that this is an Indian community, the Heiltsuk Indian band. It obtains a good measure of funding from the federal government through the Department of Indian Affairs, Health and Welfare and a number of other federal agencies. This demonstrates the use, or abuse, of the taxpayers' dollars by this government because it is this government that is paying 600 per cent more for food. For a family on social assistance, the federal government must pay the social assistance at rates that provide food at 600 per cent. It would drop down to a normal figure if the government would simply provide that roll-on, roll-off facility.

Bella Bella, like many other Indian communities in Canada, is in serious need of housing. There are two and three families living in some houses. When they are paying hundreds of percentage points higher than in urban areas it is coming out of the federal taxpayers' pockets. The way to reduce that is to allow it to come in by major hauler on the B.C. ferries. The B.C. ferry could stop and unload there if the federal government would place a roll-on, roll-off facility on the Indian reserve.

This is one of the most outrageous things I have seen in the 12 years I have been in this House of Commons. I have been asking the federal government to consider that facility for 12 years. When we started talking about it the cost was \$1 million. The federal government has spent far more than \$1 million every single year on the excessive costs for food, shelter and basic services because it has not addressed the key transportation issue for the Bella Bella area, the Campbell Island home of the Heiltsuk Indian band.

It is time for the ferry facility. The roll-on, roll-off facility which will hook into coastal shipping and transportation is now estimated to cost \$5 million. The cost of food has gone up, the cost of building materials has gone up, and the cost of construction equipment moving in and out has gone up. The cost of plant and equipment for their new fish processing operation has gone up. Yet, that is still an extremely good buy.