

tionship with DND so as to make our efforts as well coordinated as possible and similarly with the United States, a country with which co-operation is apparently of the first magnitude. Again, with the geography we have and with the extent of our coasts as well as four inland waters, there are limitations to the quality of the job that can be done.

I am sure my hon. friend will realize that to do a perfect job for that distance would cost billions.

An hon. Member: \$10 million.

Mr. Pepin: What?

Mr. Skelly: If I might elaborate, Mr. Chairman, this demonstrates the dilemma. The Minister of Transport really does not grasp the basic concept. His former colleague from Skeena had been beating away at the government for five years trying to tell them the service is totally inadequate. The minister referred to the 21 metre vessel program, but that is to meet an entirely different need. Its only capability is an inshore capability; it cannot be taken out in Dixon Entrance or Queen Charlotte Sound in extremely rough water. Also, it cannot be delivered there. A person will die in that water within 35 minutes.

There is a program that could be developed, however. There are 14 helicopters on the west coast of Canada but they are used in an erratic fashion. If they were to be moved to the Canadian forces station at Holbrook or Masset—the capability of the Sikorsky which is a perfect marine helicopter for distribution along the coast—that equipment could be moved anywhere on the coast in 35 minutes. The service could cover from Sitka, Alaska, to Port Angeles in 35 minutes.

I have had a chance to discuss this with Boeing, who handle the CH113, and with the Sikorsky people. Rough and dirty figures, estimated on the high side, are that the relocation of that equipment would cost less than \$10 million. That is the high side, rough and dirty figure. If the minister does not believe my figures he can check with the companies.

The 21 metre vessel will not be adequate in a situation such as the one with the *Lee Wan Zing*. If that is not enough to impress the government and the department that vital changes have to be made now, I would remind them that Iona Campagnolo has said, as many others have, that there is a real problem. The government has missed the point completely. At any rate, I suspect it will take the sinking of the *Queen of Prince Rupert* or something of that nature to really drive the point home.

The B.C. transportation agreement is another very serious concern for the people of British Columbia. There are many Indian communities along the coast and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will appreciate some of the dilemmas they face. A former minister of transport, Otto Lang, made an agreement with the government of B.C. as a result of which the service of Northland Navigation, which served the entire coast, was scrapped. In return, Mr. Lang approached the premier of British Columbia and gave him \$8 million as a subsidy for transportation. They placed a clause in

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that agreement which says that the province of British Columbia agrees that in accepting the federal government subsidy as provided herein for ferry and coastal freight and passenger service in B.C. coastal waters, it will assure reasonable and adequate service and appropriate supervision thereof.

● (2110)

The *Queen of Prince Rupert*, the only vessel travelling up and down that coast, was stopped from serving the coast of B.C. on April 6. It is expected that the ferry service might return on June 1, but it will be a different vessel, the *Queen of the North*, but there is absolutely no guarantee about that.

Indian communities up and down that coast, as well as other communities, have all been cut off from services. The only way out is by air and the cost is roughly \$180 return per person. The freight rates that are coming in are enormous. The government of British Columbia certainly has not lived up to the intent of that particular clause.

I would propose that the minister compare both coasts of Canada, and ignore for the moment the constitutional requirements by looking at how the federal government fulfils its transportation responsibility through a subsidy program. On the east coast of Canada a rough figure on a per capita basis is \$44 while in B.C. the per capita figure is \$4. Considering some of the very disruptive moves made by the minister's predecessor that have totally disrupted the service on the coast of B.C., and an example is Northland Navigation. Another area of that department that built a \$1 million wharf at Bella Coola to service vessels suddenly cut the line of service off to it. The Minister of Indian Affairs, who has been pouring millions of dollars into economic development in Indian communities to solve things like massive unemployment because of the loose and ragged nature of the agreement with the government of B.C., in a sort of abrogation of responsibility has suddenly said that that is it for nine weeks, in the middle of the fishing and tourist season.

The government of B.C. decided to close down the community of Ocean Falls, which is right smack in the middle, and it depends absolutely on that ferry service. The town was closed down. Roughly 400 people to this point in time have been laid off, and there is no ferry to haul their goods in or out. They cannot fly their goods in or out; they must be barged in at a tremendously expensive rate.

I would urge the minister to end the subsidy to B.C. In fact, stop it right now because the government of B.C. has failed to live up to that agreement. It is a strange thing for a person from British Columbia to say, but I would urge the minister to go to British Columbia, open the negotiations with that province and come to a conditional agreement that provides specifically what services will be provided to what communities and on what basis. Then, for your part, offer a fair subsidy, a subsidy which is somewhere nearly comparable to what is offered on the east coast of Canada. I would like to hear your reaction to that approach.