

Fishing and Recreational Harbours

although the government went berserk when Sun Life said it was moving its head office from Montreal. I suppose moving from Newfoundland is different from moving from Quebec.

Anyway, there is a chance of putting a fish plant in St. Lawrence, Newfoundland. I ask the minister not to listen to those officials who say it involves a difficult decision. An assistant to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Lessard), one Tom Webb, was quoted on January 20 as saying that the federal government was a long way from making any decision on the proposed plant. Well, if that is an accurate reflection of DREE's attitude toward this proposal, Mr. Webb will be a long way from surviving with the present minister. This month the mine was finally closed and the 300 unemployed people there need a chance to get themselves launched again. I ask the minister to act quickly on this situation at St. Lawrence.

I think my time is about up so I leave the House with the plea that a quick decision be made.

• (2012)

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on third reading of Bill C-2, and I delighted to see the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment (Mr. LeBlanc) in the chamber this evening. I was very interested in the remarks which the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Mr. Young) made last Wednesday. He is also a member of parliament from the province of Ontario, which has more than a passing interest in that portion of the minister's budget that is allocated to small harbours and recreation. There are many anomalies within this bill which we cannot support.

As a representative from one of the principal tourist areas in Canada, small craft harbours and recreational facilities are of the utmost importance to me and to my constituents. I want to emphasize just how important it is that the province of Ontario be represented in this debate. Many people think that, because Ontario is one of the most populated and more wealthy provinces in Canada, we naturally benefit the most when it comes to the spending of government money. That is certainly not the case with small craft harbours. In this case, Ontario is getting the short end.

The estimates for fisheries and marines for 1978 allot only \$30 million to the important and neglected area of small craft harbours, a mere \$4 million of which is destined for Ontario, which amounts to roughly 10 per cent. Sixty per cent of this will be spent on commercial fishing harbours. What is left over will be spent on recreational facilities, development and maintenance costs. The amount left over, which is the actual amount of money that will go to the construction and maintenance of recreational small craft harbours, is disgracefully inadequate.

I have heard hon. members from the Atlantic provinces and the province of British Columbia speak of the need for funds for fishing harbours and how money allotted for recreational and tourist purposes is being taken away from the fishing area. Recreational facilities are of very high economic priority to my

[Mr. Crosbie.]

constituency, as well as to the neglected areas of the province of Ontario.

I would like to point out that in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka people trying to make a living depend very heavily on tourist dollars. Those tourist dollars will be generated if, and only if, we have adequate facilities to accommodate those who want to use them. Perhaps some of the hon. members who begrudge the allocation of funds for recreational and tourist purposes are misled by the word "recreational". Perhaps they think we want only to upgrade the facilities for our own use or for the sake of appearance. We need to improve facilities to protect the valuable tourist dollar and the competitive position of tourist operators in the area. I would argue—and I am sure the tourist operators in my riding would agree with me—that the tourist dollar is just as important as the upgrading of fishing harbours to the fishermen in the Atlantic provinces and the west coast.

We in Ontario must be able to accommodate the increase in boating and the number of boating enthusiasts who visit each summer. Boating is growing in Ontario at the rate of 12 per cent per year. This has placed a considerable strain on facilities. In many instances these facilities are badly in need of maintenance and upgrading. I do not have to emphasize the importance of the tourist dollar to Canada. A few days ago, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner) announced some very important proposals in an effort to lower our staggering tourist deficit. These are certainly welcome changes, but what is important in my riding is accommodating the thousands of tourists who visit each summer from Canada and the United States and use our small craft harbours.

The recreational aspect of small craft harbours has been largely overshadowed by the importance of the fishing industry on the east and west coasts. I am not advocating that there should be any less emphasis on that very vital industry. Certainly they have very real economic and unemployment problems, which surpass those in my own riding and in most parts of Ontario. Nevertheless, the absolute need to improve and create new facilities in Ontario must not be ignored. Ontario is not receiving its fair share of federal money for the construction and maintenance of these facilities. We in this province depend heavily on tourist income dollars to help the economy grow. Small craft harbours, their upkeep and growth are very important parts of the tourist industry in Canada.

Ontario has a tourist potential which is unmatched in this country. Approximately 110 million people live within one day's drive of the Great Lakes. In 1972 a study of central Canada indicated that Ontario had 774,000 small craft. With the average growth rate, the estimates indicate that this year there are approximately 1,300,000 craft in Ontario. We must rid ourselves of the idea that recreational small craft harbours are somehow not very important compared to the fishing industry in the maritimes and on the west coast. They are important to the tourist industry, to the economy of the province of Ontario and to Canada. In 1976-1977 the value placed on sport fishing in Ontario by the provincial government was \$450 million, which is a considerable amount of