

Funding for security enhancements might be on its way

By ALEX BINKLEY

OTTAWA – Ports and other marine facilities may be a big step closer to getting federal financial help for the extra security features they added in the last few years.

Transport Minister Tony Valeri has re-introduced the government's anti-terrorism bill that includes a clause to allow Ottawa to provide funding for port security. The bill, formerly C17 and now C7, was among the legislation terminated when former prime minister Jean Chrétien prorogued Parliament in mid-November.

Under Parliamentary rules, the re-introduced bill is forwarded to where it was when the last session ended. In this case, a Senate committee, as the Commons had already approved the bill. It's expected the legislation will receive final approval in a few weeks and that should set the stage for Ottawa to start paying some of the marine security costs. The anti-terrorism bill would suspend a section in the Canada Marine Act that forbids Ottawa from making

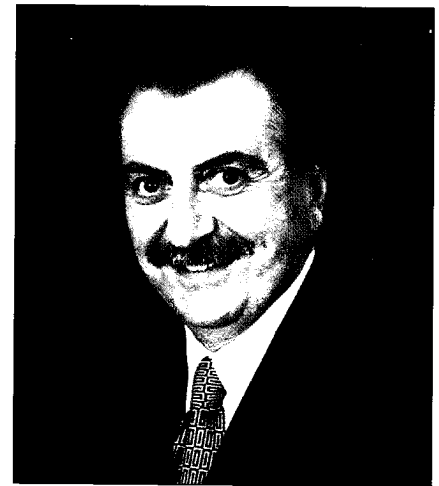
direct payments to the ports.

Gary LeRoux, head of the Association of Canadian Port Authorities, said he expects federal help will also be made available to ports and terminals that aren't port authorities. The recently formed Canadian Coalition for Marine Security has estimated that the marine security rules will cost ports, terminal operators and shipowners at least \$100 million in start up costs.

Security is being ramped up to meet the dictates of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code. The ports and terminal operators state there is little direct benefit to them from the extra security and, as it was designed to protect the public, the government should contribute.

Mr. LeRoux said the marine industry has been told by Transport Canada officials that the government wants to help with security costs but couldn't until the law was changed. He said he was optimistic that help would be forthcoming.

The Marine Security Coalition has



Toni Valeri

Re-introduced Bill C-7

been in Ottawa to discuss its concerns with federal officials. It said the cost of meeting the security requirements would be a direct hit on the bottom line of companies. They will also have to pay the cost of maintaining the security measures over the coming years. The ports and terminal operators will have to acquire a lot of new surveillance equipment and increase land and water patrols around their facilities.

The ports have been seeking government help with the extra security costs in part because Washington has doled out U.S.\$700 million to American ports.