

Bridges the answer to ferry fares

Times Colonist

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

The increase in ferry fares has again brought out the questions --why me, why should I have to pay the fuel surcharge?

It might have something to do with where you elect to live.

Does anyone remember when it was an overnight trip to Victoria from Vancouver and B.C. Ferries had not been created? In those days, you lived on an island out of choice and you had your own boat. Today we have one of the best ferry services in the world and rising fuel costs.

The solution to current complaints is quite simple. Build a four-lane bridge from Vancouver Island to Gabriola, jump the narrows to Valdes and continue south over Portier Pass to Galiano and then to Sturdies Bay.

Put in a large ferry terminal at Sturdies Bay and eliminate Duke Point, Departure Bay, Swartz Bay and Horseshoe Bay.

Put a bridge over Sansum Narrows to Saltspring Island.

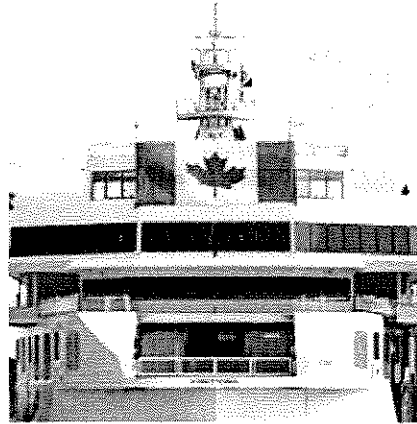
Recapture part of the costs of the bridges with the sale of very lucrative property in Duke Point, Departure Bay, Swartz Bay and Horseshoe Bay and old ships not needed

Apply tolls to the bridges that are within the norms and eliminate them when the bridge is paid off. Reduce the ferry fleet and use only large new ones on the Tsawwassen/Sturdies Bay run with a ferry every 15 minutes.

Property values will go up, provincial taxes will go up and the roads on the islands will improve.

Bob Tritschler

Parksville



CREDIT: Darren Stone, Times Colonist

The Coastal Celebration, B.C. Ferries' third Super C Class vessel, arrives at Swartz Bay. A letter-writer suggests that a series of bridges and a new terminal at Sturdies Bay on Galiano Island would eliminate the need for many ferries and result in reduced fares.

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Perhaps B.C. should secede

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An excellent article by Jack Knox on B.C. Ferries (June 21). When B.C. Ferries was started by W.A.C. Bennett, the government bought out the Black Ball Ferries run from Vancouver to Victoria.

Black Ball Ferries' formula for success included the mandate that for every five jobs on the water, there was one job on land.

B.C. Ferries now has more land-based employees than water-based, with more than 400 managers for a fleet of 40 boats.

B.C. Ferries now operates as a private corporation that has a monopoly on the use of our ferry terminals and boats and there is nothing we, the users, can do about it.

Perhaps secession is the answer as somebody is not living up to the Confederation deal here!

Arvid Chalmers

Saltspring Island

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User-pay hypocrisy

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The ongoing cost increases for ferry travel are justified on user-pay principle.

The ferries are our road to the mainland, just as the Sea to Sky Highway is the driveway to the upper class playground at Whistler.

But it is not likely you will see a user-pay toll put on that road to pay for the recent improvements there.

Dennis Robinson

Victoria

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