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Mr. Friesen: We don't have any.

Ms. Copps: The Hon. Member states that we do not have any money. In the time that it took for this Government to slash the budget by about 66 per cent for renewable energy, for alternative energy sources, for solar energy, and for other types of energy sources that are not subject to the vagaries of oil spills and to the dangers of the seas, it was in the process of doubling the national debt. In the last four years the national debt in the country has doubled. When the time was there, when the economy was ripe, when the Government could have moved in and done some things for renewable energy, instead it frittered it away on millions of dollars in by-election buy-outs and all manner of other things. I know the that Minister will not want to comment on by-election buy-outs because he comes with a fairly heavy price tag.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Charest: Cheap, cheap!

Ms. Copps: The Member states that I am cheap. I would like to say to the Member that the people off the British Columbia coast would like to know from the Government, in a little more detail, the specifics of just what kind of contingency plan we have in place to protect the aquaculture, to protect the beautiful park land, to protect the beautiful oceans, and to protect the Queen Charlotte Islands, about which my leader spoke so eloquently, from the potential devastation that is about to be wrought by the movement of this slick away from Alaska toward British Columbia.

During Question Period I heard the Minister say that allegedly, according to his figures, the spill was supposed to have been 1,000 kilometres away from Canada. I also heard the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton), who has some passing knowledge in this area, state to the House of Commons that his information from the Canadian Coast Guard suggests that in fact that particular spill is 200 kilometres from the Canadian coastline.

Mr. Angus: Miles.

Ms. Copps: Miles. You have not yet converted in British Columbia!

The Hon. Members states 200 miles; the Minister says 1,000 kilometres. I would like to know what contingency plan the Minister of the Environment has in place to protect not only the economy of British Columbia but that precious potential for future generations that is embodied in the kind of beauty that we have seen in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

I have not heard anything from the Minister. I do not know if he is afraid to speak. I do not know if he wants to be able to hear all the critics and all the criticism before he stands in his place. I do not understand why he sends in a pinch-hitter who is an insult to the people of British Columbia, by way of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) who was not able to give a single substantive contingency plan to at least assuage the legitimate fears and concerns of the people in British Columbia. All we heard was the Minister of Transport claiming that the Opposition is trying to make cheap political points.

In February, before this latest devastating oil spill occurred, we in the Liberal Party wrote to the Prime Minister, who sold away the country by way of the trade deal. It was about time he should cash in his chips. He must have got at least a couple of chips from that sell-out: friends in American Express, friends across the border, hands across the border. The time has come to cash in those chips. We have asked the Prime Minister, and that was again articulated tonight by the Leader and the very able Hon. Member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Turner).

What we have asked of the Prime Minister is that we get an international agreement to lay down the law on the specifics of the transportation of this dangerous and potentially lethal oil from Alaska to the United States, and specifically that there are some regulations about when the oil can be transported, under what conditions it can be transported, and under whose captainship it can be transported. We have not received sufficient answers.

Another very direct concern of the fishermen who have already lost millions of dollars as a result of lost catch, and who are facing the potential of losing further millions of dollars, is the question of compensation. If the Canadian fishing industry is going to be hurt equally as bad as the fishing industry in Alaska, or if there is an ancillary devastating effect on spawning of new stock that will be the life-blood of future fishing generations, who is going to foot the bill?

What I heard tonight was the Minister of Transport stating that the Canadian Government is offering Exxon a couple of ships and a few dinghies to get out there and fight this massive oil spill. Only 5 per cent of that oil has already been collected. Some 95 per cent is floating out in the high seas and eventually will find its way either into the sea bed, into the Canadian aqua system, or definitely it will be felt through the food system.