

Oil Pollution

been in the past. Meanwhile, the work that the two governments have undertaken in contingency planning in improving navigation systems will be vigorously pursued.

Nothing could be more useful in lending weight and conviction to the Canadian case than that I should be able to convey to the United States government the unanimous wish of the House that this study should be undertaken.

Mr. Woolliams: I wonder who wrote that.

Mr. Sharp: This House does not often express its unanimous view in this way. Actually, on three occasions, recently, has the House supported the government in its representations to the United States; that is a clear indication, I think, of the way in which our foreign policy and relations with the United States are being handled, because we have been able to obtain the support of all parties in this House. It is striking to note that the resolutions we sent to the United States on Amchitka and the resolution of three weeks ago which dealt with the risk of oil pollution from tankers were unanimously approved by this House. I believe that this will indicate to the United States government that the government of Canada is speaking not only as a government party, but that it is speaking for the whole country, and is speaking with the support of all political parties in this country. It is interesting to note that all three of these resolutions have been directed to the same subject. That fact will help to support the position we are taking.

The conviction with which British Columbia members on both sides of the House have spoken in the present debate demonstrates that this is not an issue on which opinion on the west coast is divided. However, the conviction with which members from other provinces have spoken demonstrates equally that Canadians see this as a national, not a regional issue. It is in this sense that I would like to be authorized to speak to the United States government on behalf of the House. Therefore, I urge the unanimous adoption of the motion, as amended.

[Translation]

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity of saying a few words on the motion under review because we are in favour of it, even if it gave rise yesterday to some disagreement. We consider that it is important and, therefore, must be debated.

Mr. Speaker, this is an international problem which cannot easily be solved. Moreover, this already complicated question has been further aggravated by the recent accident which launched a wave of protests from the citizens of British Columbia. We cannot blame them because we are all duly concerned with the protection of our waters and want to fight pollution with every means at our disposal.

However, we wonder if the government had indeed taken all necessary precautions to prevent this accident.

• (1250)

We deplore today an accident that concerns all Canadians, especially the citizens of British Columbia, for it is said that it will cause irretrievable damage to the environment.

[Mr. Sharp.]

As a matter of fact, it is always the same thing. Surely there must be a way to solve that problem which the government has been considering for a long time. Indeed, it created a committee for that purpose. There were also many discussions about it but nothing has been accomplished yet.

The government and the international body concerned are studying the pipeline question. I believe this will be a means of controlling pollution and preventing the danger we are exposing ourselves to by letting big tankers in our waters for if there has been one accident, there could be others, liable to cause irretrievable damage. That is why we were willing to have the hon. member put his motion. In fact, we hope the discussion can take place because we too believe that the motion was a very important one and should be the subject of a debate.

When it comes to water pollution, air pollution or pollution of the general environment by cities discharging their sewage into waterways, we must be prepared to spend a great deal of money to cope with such a disaster. Therefore we ask the government to take the proper measures to protect the public.

If the government or international organizations are delaying the building of pipelines for the movement of oil, it is because the financial question is not settled yet. Therefore, since the opportunity arises, we ask once more that the necessary steps be taken to issue credits at low interest rate in order that these works may be carried out.

If these projects are physically possible I can't see why the government would not make them financially feasible. All delays in building and improving houses that should be done in Canada are due to financial difficulties. As a matter of fact, if we have the engineers, the building materials and all other necessary elements to proceed with these improvements, we can assuredly find ways of financing them.

There are references to improvements, pipeline construction and various other means likely to better the situation, but nobody dares deal with the financial issue since nothing is possible without the necessary funds.

Since it is a financial matter, the government should appoint an ad hoc committee that would seek to find the financial means needed to realize such projects. If such projects were feasible, it should certainly be possible to finance them with means others than those we are using today.

For instance, let us consider the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority which cannot pay back its debt or the interest on it. Yet it should be a profitable enterprise, as any other public undertaking for that matter. When an enterprise is not profitable, it means that other organizations are taking advantage of that fact.

Some projects that could provide jobs without anyone getting saddled with debts that cannot be repaid on account of exorbitant interests on capital, are postponed. If investment funds were provided interest-free, we could realize any project useful to this country and to foreign countries as well since quite often international matters are involved.