

Navigable Waters Protection Act

presented the very difficult problem, in terms of pollution particularly, in the first few days of an accident of determining just exactly who does own a vessel, just exactly when a vessel is abandoned, just exactly when ownership changes from one party to another party or from first parties to second or indeed even third parties in connection with the insurance of cargo.

Many ships sailing around these days carry cargo which is worth a lot more than the ships themselves. This is one of the points the hon. gentleman was trying to make, and I agree with him. In some cases the insurance on these vessels is relatively low, and in terms of the total value of the vessel and the cargo, the greater amount is on the cargo.

This question is there, and I believe all of us on this side would have wished that the hon. member might have attempted to address himself to the problem of ownership by perhaps changing the emphasis of what he is seeking to achieve. I suggest he might have done that by seeking enabling legislation authorizing, and indeed directing, the Department of Transport or other agencies to take what action is required to immediately remove the effect of the pollution or whatever the difficulty happened to be. He could then come along and hit them, as he has quite properly done, with a provision for financial responsibility. There may be other practical reasons why such an approach cannot be made, Mr. Speaker, but it suggests what we can do within hours of the occurrence of an accident.

● (5:20 p.m.)

The explanatory notes to this bill refer to a shipping accident. They indicate that four months passed between the time of the accident and when it was finally cleaned up. In Nova Scotia, we have just experienced a disastrous accident and all Nova Scotians are aware of the sorry and dreadful state of affairs which obtains when such a disaster is not swiftly and effectively dealt with, particularly when it involves oil. The emergency should be dealt with within hours, not days or weeks. It is to this point that I think comment should be and hopefully will be directed by those who are working diligently on the preparation of a report on the *Arrow* disaster in Chedabucto Bay in Nova Scotia.

Speaking personally and not for my party, I believe that in cases such as the *Arrow* and the *Torrey Canyon*, where we are talking in terms of massive bulk carriers of 250,000 or

500,000 tons—I understand that Lloyds of London in the last year or two have introduced insurance provisions for a one million ton tanker—our action immediately following an accident is vitally important. No amount of organization, laws, regulations and up to date equipment are going to prevent an accident. The accident curve is real and those who believe accidents can be prevented are whistling in the dark.

It is my belief that stretching from the tip of Vancouver Island north, crossing into the Arctic, across the Arctic and down the eastern coast, we should have a series of "fire stations" if you will. These should be staffed by highly trained, skilled personnel headed by a scientist or a man highly trained in the techniques of combating oil pollution. The crew should be trained in the effective use of the latest and most adequate equipment available to deal with pollution. Such crews should be stationed along our coasts at convenient intervals, but not more than 150 miles apart. Perhaps the stations should be under the jurisdiction of the armed forces with the crews on duty 24 hours a day, even if they stayed there for months and months without, we hope, ever being called upon.

The cost of maintaining these stations, compared with the losses resulting from an accident of a supertanker the size of the *Manhattan* is infinitesimal. These tankers are no longer dreams but are realities on the high seas. I think it is regrettable that the hon. member did not address himself in the bill to more practical considerations of this nature because that is something we support.

It is regrettable that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) was not able to persuade other countries of the advantages of this proposal and the absolute necessity for it. I hope there is no member who would wish to talk this bill out, because we would take some pleasure in supporting it although, as I have mentioned, it is deficient in that it avoids one or two practical realities.

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew North): Mr. Speaker, in speaking on this particular measure I think it must be said that, as a result of the *Arrow* catastrophe, we all recognize this is a very important bill in principle. It is also important for the reason expressed in the explanatory notes to the bill itself.

First of all, I should like to state that the Navigable Waters Protection Act is presently being considered and will be amended to cover such situations in the future. In making this statement, it is only fair that I make