

What else could the Government have done about this crisis? This crisis was an oil spill resulting from an accident which occurred up north involving an American oil tanker in American waters. We monitored the situation for weeks, every hour, almost every minute. We knew what was happening with the oil spill and, happily for us, Canada was spared. What is the meaning of saying this Minister is a reactive Minister because he only reacted to the *Valdez* crisis? Who on earth could have prevented this accident? The only thing that God is asking from the Minister, as any ordinary man, is to react swiftly to an act of God, sometimes human error, as was the case of the *Valdez* crisis.

We are bold sometimes and we will be bolder when the Budget allows us to do so. We know we are operating under very difficult fiscal restraints and that we must be responsible for the future of Canada and the financial health of any provincial government in Canada. But at the same time, we will be bold. The Member must understand that sometimes it is very difficult.

In Montreal today, I announced a plan under which a brand new team of 25 people will be set up to cover the St. Lawrence. We have today published a list of 50 companies that are located along the St. Lawrence which pollute that river. These 25 commandos will in a few weeks be investigating each company and defining new norms and technology requirements in order to cut pollution and to establish pollution protocol. The cost will be borne by the companies themselves, amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Representatives from these companies said that this new plan would be very difficult and worrisome. It is. I know that. Everything will have to be done within five years with an objective to reduce the St. Lawrence pollution by 90 per cent. The Government is doing all it can and it will do more. We know we have to be tough. We must not cancel the job.

In my riding there is an aluminum smelter plant which employs 500 to 600 people. It is one of the two major employers in the City of Alma. This plant is not on the list of polluters which was published today, but it does pollute the environment. The Government could close this plant, but it would put 500 or 600 *pères de famille* out of their jobs. What we must do is to say to Alcan "Well, you have five years to reduce pollution by 90 per cent.

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We have a fund of \$50 million to help you define and develop new technology, but the company will have to pay for the pollution". That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to thank the Minister for his participation in this debate today, and I want to ask him this question. A few moments ago, the Minister was talking about his clean-up program for the St. Lawrence River. As he probably knows, I represent an area that borders the river, an area which may be the most polluted on the river. I am talking about Cornwall Island, where the Akwesasne Saint-Regis Indian reserve is located. The Minister is certainly aware of all the pollution problems originating mostly from plants on the American side, in Massena, particularly from the Reynolds plant and from General Foundries, a General Motors plant in the United States.

I would like to know from the Minister whether the St. Lawrence River depollution program he was referring to earlier only includes the Québec part of the river, because often, on the matter of the St. Lawrence River depollution, the reference is to the River in Québec and the Great Lakes in Ontario. There is however a part of the River in Ontario that extends between the Great Lakes and the Québec border, which is my riding and one or two others to the West. Can the Minister tell me whether his program includes the Ontario section and whether his "commando team" as he referred to them himself this morning will also be in my riding and elsewhere? I see the Minister is going through his notes, but if he is not in a position to give me an answer today, would he be kind enough to send that information along, because our area is neither in the great Lakes nor the Québec River; it is that part of the River between the Great Lakes and the Québec border, and sometimes we feel a bit left out in the whole process. I hope this will not be the case this time.

• (1610)

Mr. Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I promise to provide a list of firms that were identified as the most serious polluters before the end of the afternoon. Unfortunately, I do not have the list with me. I hoped I had, but I will be pleased to make it available to the Hon. Member.