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have sophisticated equipment like airborne, multispectral equipment which can track slicks from the sky.

The last time we needed that kind of equipment we had to borrow it from the Americans. None of our equipment nor the depots that are currently available to handle a spill could ever handle a spill the size of the Exxon spill of 240,000 barrels. Furthermore, the Minister of the Environment and the Government do not have an active procurement policy to make sure that the newest, the latest and the best of technology for the cleaning of oil spills is available.

Instead they wait until equipment becomes antiquated or irreparable before purchasing new technology. We are left with the situation where, even though environmentalists have for two decades as we now know predicted a disaster similar to the one we have now seen taking place in Alaska, to date the federal Government has refused to commit itself financially to upgrading the kind of cleaning equipment and new technology that must be available if we are to continue in the development of fossil fuel as a fuel energy source, which is obviously been the path of the Government.

Not only has the Government completely abrogated and neglected its responsibility in developing the technology to clean up in that area, but at the same time it has drastically slashed, devastated, annihilated, massacred and completely abolished the funds that had been available under past Liberal Governments for the development of alternative fuel energies.

Fossil fuel is not the only answer to the energy problems facing Canadians. As long as the Government refuses to examine in an intelligent way the alternatives available to fossil fuel, we will continue to see ourselves at risk by the kinds of human error, criminal negligence and the oil spills we saw most recently in Alaska and prior to that on other occasions off Vancouver Island.

• (2130)

Instead of developing an intelligent policy for the development of alternative energies, what we have seen is a Government that has cut and slashed in every area of alternative energy sources, and instead has literally put all its eggs in the fossil fuel basket.

The Prime Minister is prone to hyperbole, and we heard some of that hyperbole only one short day ago in the House of Commons regarding the environmental imperative. I am sure when the Minister speaks that we

will hear he is very concerned. He has been very concerned about every environmental issue that has crossed his plate since he became a Minister. I remind the Minister that three months is long enough for the Canadian people to wait for some answers, and concern is not enough.

The Prime Minister has stated the world itself is facing an environmental challenge of unprecedented magnitude. "Recognizing this my Government. . ." and on and on goes the verbiage. At the same time the same Government slashed the budget that was available under previous Liberal Governments.

In 1984 spending on intelligent alternative forms of energy, including renewable and energy conservation programs, stood at \$405 million. It was not enough, but it was a start.

What is the current spending level five years after 1984, five years after the Government has doubled the national debt? The current spending level for renewable and energy conservation programs is \$76 million, and it is due to be cut back to \$39 million by 1993.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Ms. Copps: The Friends of the Earth found it passing strange that the International Chamber of Commerce, that well-known friend of the environment, joined hands with other converts to the environmental issue in awarding the Prime Minister some kind of award on the issue of environment. I cannot go into it much beyond that because frankly I was appalled. Environmental groups were certainly appalled. When one looks at the Prime Minister's record on the environment, it does not hold water. It does not stand up to public scrutiny. In these areas it does not hold water, it does not hold oil; it is a political slick that the Prime Minister has been prone to use merely for re-election purposes.

It made me a little ill too when the Prime Minister came to the Canada Centre for Inland Waters in my own community during the election where he made a great announcement: \$125 million to clean up the hot spots in the Great Lakes, and also from most recent studies this week, the St. Clair River, the Niagara River, and Lake Ontario. They go on and on. He announced a \$125 million package. The price tag for cleaning up the Hamilton Harbour alone is \$120 million. Who is he trying to kid? He talks about the environment, but he is not prepared to put his money where his mouth is.