

Adjournment Debate

well as widening them for larger vessels. The necessary land was purchased in the three communities at that end of the Seaway in 1975 but the project has since been placed on hold.

The second plan is the conventional twinning plan which would twin locks numbered 7, 3, 2 and 1 in the same manner as the flight locks 4, 5 and 6. Here again, the necessary land is in place.

The third proposal is the hybrid twinning plan which also calls for the existing locks to be twinned but with longer and wider locks to accommodate the larger ships of the future.

As these plans are already drawn up, and considering the importance of the canal to Canada's future economy, I would like to ask my question again, this time to the Parliamentary Secretary. In light of the recent accident and in light of the future demands which will be placed on the current facilities, will these proposals be given serious consideration with a view to implementing one of them in the near future as the Government looks at improving the Welland Canal?

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, given the importance attached to this waterway system, of course the Minister will give very serious consideration to the proposals put forward by the Hon. Member this evening and which have been reiterated by him on a number of occasions.

I would like to take the opportunity to briefly indicate to the House, first, that because of the uniqueness of the accident of the blow-out—the fact there was no history to rely on—congratulations are probably in order to the officials of the Seaway, the contractors, subcontractors and the men who actually worked on the site for the splendid and I feel very responsible and professional way they effected the repairs. Concrete will be poured into the blow-out hole commencing later today, if it has not already been done. We are indeed optimistic that the reopening date of November 6 not only will be met but will be exceeded. Hopefully we might have ships moving prior to that date. There are 107 ships in the system. We can move these at the rate of about 24 or 25 a day so it will take about a week to clear up the backlog and return the activities of the Canal to normal.

● (1810)

To address very briefly the contingency plans that have been put in place, the House will be aware that the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) and the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Mayer) have made the offer and, indeed, grain will move assisted by CN which will locate and operate grain hopper cars east of Thunder Bay. The Government, in its wisdom, and to facilitate the movement of this product, will assist in the payment of any additional costs that are incurred. We are very pleased with the progress of the repairs. Those involved with them are to be congratulated.

With respect to the cause of the blow-out, I do not think we will know that with any certainty for some time to come. The detailed analysis will take quite a while. I thank the Hon.

Member for his suggestions and reassure him that the Minister and the Government will take them seriously.

CO-OPERATIVES—GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO TASK FORCE REPORT. (B) REQUEST THAT CO-ORDINATING AGENCY BE ESTABLISHED

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay-Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity of saying something more this afternoon about the importance of co-operative development in Canada. Two weeks ago today I asked the Minister responsible for liaison with co-operatives (Mr. Mayer) about a Government response to the report of the National Task Force on Co-operative Development. I was not satisfied with his answer at the time, but I feel honoured today to have him in the House to respond further in the minutes that he has to this report. I really do look forward to him saying good things about what the Government plans to do.

In the minutes that lie before me, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say something about the importance of co-operatives and to underscore the importance of a substantial federal response. Mr. Ray Siemens, the President of the Co-operative Union of Canada, wrote to all Members of Parliament early this year sending along copies of *A Co-operative Development Strategy for Canada* which dates from May of 1984. He sent a memorandum with that, the second paragraph of which reads:

The new government has indicated that its primary objective "is to put in place a policy framework that will release the creative energies of Canadians to build a better future for themselves" and challenged Canadians to participate in wide-range consultations about this framework and the future direction of our country.

He goes on to indicate that people involved with co-operatives in Canada were very happy to have that invitation and joined in the consultation. I am aware that those discussions continue.

The report itself, *A Co-operative Development Strategy for Canada*, makes a number of points that I think help us to appreciate how very important co-operatives could be to achieving just what the Government set out in the fall of 1984 as its own objectives. On page 5 of the report it reads:

Pairing the democratic responsiveness and economic efficiency that characterize co-operative business, we believe that co-ops can play a key role in Canada's national development. As serious as the new problems are that face Canada, they also open many opportunities for new development. We have identified four such areas where co-ops can make a difference. Worker-owned co-operative businesses offer a direct means of meeting the often desperate need of many Canadians for jobs and a sense of control in their lives. The rapidly increasing costs of health care systems are straining government finances; co-operative health care delivery systems provide an attractive and affordable solution. Fisheries co-ops are an overlooked, yet critical part of the solution to problems facing the fishing industry. And in meeting the demand for affordable housing in this country, the co-operative model has proven to be a successful alternative and could be expanded to the benefit of many Canadians.

● (1815)

The report focuses on these four areas. In scanning the 32 recommendations which this task force arrived at last year for developing co-operatives in Canada, I will note those that deal specifically with matters that the federal Government could support.