

Oil Pollution

Westminster (Mr. Hogarth) that I did not raise the matter of the cottage of the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Pringle); the hon. member for Fraser Valley East raised it himself. I do not have the record before me, but I believe the hon. member suggested in his speech that he had a personal interest in this matter. I agree with the hon. member for New Westminster that a number of Canadians with cottages on the United States side of the border certainly are concerned. Why should they not be concerned, as no doubt are many American cottage owners? The hon. member for Fraser Valley East is doubly concerned because he happens to be one of them.

Mr. Hogarth: Mr. Speaker, I accept that, if it is a retraction of the inference left in this House that the hon. member for Fraser Valley East was protecting his own property when he moved this motion. I should like to get off these silly and interpolitical things and say that what we are all concerned about is one of the most beautiful parts of Canada which will be destroyed unless firm action is taken.

The damage involved could be irreparable. I am fed up with the apparent influence which large United States oil companies appear to have on all governments concerned with this matter. I do not exclude the government with which we in this House are concerned; I refer to all governments. I am fed up with the obvious delay in doing something in respect of the matter of safety which is involved.

I think rather than refer this matter to the IJC, which of course is a good idea, in addition all tanker movement should be stopped, except those which are required for local purposes, until the appropriate governments have evolved the appropriate regulations and treaties and until the people of British Columbia can be assured that they will be fairly well protected from such a disaster. I say "fairly well protected" because they can never be completely protected.

All members from British Columbia are concerned: I include members of the opposition. All of us on this side are concerned. No one can take any great amount of credit, but I should like to point out that the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich certainly deserves the most credit. All of us support him in everything he has done. I also support the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis).

The problem about being a backbencher is that one does not always have the whole picture before him or the big decisions to make. It is easy for members on the backbenches and in the opposition to make wild suggestions concerning what should be done, when we do not have the expertise to deal with these questions.

However, I am not saying that the government has gone far enough with regard to protecting the interests of the people of British Columbia. With the greatest respect for the Secretary of State for External Affairs, (Mr. Sharp) I remember how difficult it was some years ago in this House to get the government to do something about the Arctic. Had it not been for a group of us who constantly prodded the government, I do not think the Arctic pollution legislation would have been passed. Certainly that is a mark for this government in the field of pollution. It was a mark for the government to have passed the clean air

[Mr. Rose.]

act and the Canada Water Act which we have in this country today. These are good steps, but I urge the government to go further than this motion contemplates. I cannot understand why the government could not take the firmest stand with the United States government in respect of this problem.

It is not good enough for the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to discuss this matter with the President of the United States without immediate action flowing from that discussion in respect of the problem not only on the west coast but on the east coast. I am not suggesting that the government is not acting or will not act. I know the reference of the matter to the IJC will have some effect. However, while this reference is being held, while the endless diplomatic processes are going on, and while the IJC is considering the matter, what will happen if a disaster should take place? As much as we support this motion and the motive of the government, what answer will many of us have for the people of British Columbia if a disaster should take place in the interim?

It is my suggestion that the government should consider moving ahead with the American government with immediate, emergency legislation pertaining to the shipments and unloading of oil in the area. We are concerned about the Cherry Point disaster. In this way some assurance could be given that immediate and appropriate steps would be taken to prevent its recurrence.

An hon. Member: Do you support the amendment?

Mr. Hogarth: I see nothing wrong with the amendment. I thank the House for its attention. I think we should get on with the motion right away and pass it.

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on the motion before the House dealing with the oil spill in British Columbia and the ecological damage which will arise from it. Before beginning the main portion of my comments I should like to record my opposition of the statement of the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perrault) who indicated that opposition members have been using this particular pollution problem in a political way. That statement does not represent the fact. I shall not outline the motions which have been moved every day this week because this was ably done by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) who pointed out that the members of the various opposition parties in this House—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Perrault) is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Perrault: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of personal privilege simply to clarify what I said. I was referring to the preceding remarks of the hon. member for Fraser Valley West. Many sincere efforts are being made by opposition members in this area of pollution, and I acknowledge them.

Mr. Harding: Mr. Speaker, I said the hon. member for Yukon had outlined the areas of concern which have been brought before this House by members of the opposition every day since this oil spill became apparent. It seems