

*Oil and Gas Act*

had set up contingency regulations for dealing with emergencies such as this. However, I find that there is no such list of contingency measures in the department. Is it not amazing? A disaster takes place on the east coast of Nova Scotia and we stand around, wringing our hands, not knowing what to do while tremendous ecological damage is being done.

Last year when the amendment to the Canada Shipping Act was being considered we supported the concept of total liability for damages; that is, we wanted Canada to have the right to collect the full cost of any damage done to our environment as a result of an oil spill. That clause was deleted; apparently the government was awaiting the outcome of the Brussels conference. The consequence of that deletion is that today, following a major disaster on the east coast of Canada resulting from an oil spill, we have no remedy. We will not know for years how much ecological damage has been done and we have no legislation to cover the situation. I say this is wrong. I lay the blame at the door of these ministers and departments responsible for having the regulations and controls drafted and who have failed, particularly during the last year, to take the required steps.

I shall now talk about other sections of Bill S-5, Mr. Speaker. It extends the jurisdiction of the act previously passed to the oil and gas areas that do not lie within the geographical limits or under the administrative control of any of our Canadian provinces. I think this is good. The extension of jurisdiction will cover the continental shelf which lies off our east, west and northern coasts; it also covers the Arctic islands and the shelves surrounding them. At least, I presume this is what the bill covers.

We have been in desperate need of adequate guidelines and regulations to cover oil and gas exploration and development in all parts of our federal jurisdiction. I am certain that far too few protective measures are now incorporated in the regulations which govern the search for oil and gas. Our federal government should be the watchdog over our resources; it should guard them from ruthless exploiters whose only goal is to make a fast dollar and who often have no regard for the safeguarding of our other resources. In many areas, our own departments have done little or no research into the long term results from faulty or careless resource development. I touched on that a few moments ago.

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• (3:00 p.m.)

I wish to take a few minutes to deal with one or two other problems in connection with oil exploration. In doing so I shall use some material from a brief prepared for the Canadian Wildlife Service by Dr. Warner in the fall of 1969. Dr. Warner received assistance from other individuals in preparing this brief. The result was a very comprehensive and thoughtful document which showed that Canada was not researching problems dealing with oil exploration along our continental shelf and in the Arctic.

I wish to refer to several sections of this brief in order to show members of the House how absolutely essential it is that we do not delay making regulations and safeguards which I believe are desperately needed. I shall quote a couple of paragraphs from this brief, because if oil leaks can occur in other countries where drilling is under way we can bet it will happen in the Arctic or the continental shelves on the east and west coasts of Canada. I quote from the bottom of page four of the brief as follows:

—there are now over 9,000 oil wells pumping from submerged areas of the world's continental shelves.

This is on a worldwide basis. A little further on Dr. Warner gives some information which he has checked. He says:

Reports now available indicate that in the Baltic and Caspian Seas oil leakage from drilling and pumping activities is resulting in grave losses to wildlife, principally the migratory waterfowl and seabirds, and to the commercial fisheries. The widely reported recent catastrophic blowout of an offshore oilwell on the Santa Barbara coast, where crude oil under pressure leaked through fissures in permeable sedimentary strata, has graphically illustrated what can happen during such underwater operations.

I shall not talk about the Santa Barbara oil spill. We all know the tremendous amount of ecological damage that has been done. We know there is an \$800 million suit against the federal government by interested groups who feel they have a chance of forcing the United States government to pay. The next paragraph of the brief should cause us to think very deeply about what could happen off the shores of Canada or in the Arctic unless we have adequate safeguards. Dr. Warner states:

While the industry claims such operations are quite "safe", an engineer presently employed by one of the companies heavily involved in offshore drilling stated privately that the life expectancy of such offshore platforms was less than ten years, owing principally to the damaging effects of storms, collisions from ships, and other environmental hazards. It has, for example, been reported that an entire drilling rig was carried away by ice in Cook Inlet, Alaska.