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pilots are sent on their missions by dispatching units which work around the clock in Vancouver, Victoria and Prince Rupert. The whole operation is run from the head office in Vancouver.

When there is a major spill from a sea-going vessel, its essentially up to the Canadian Coast Guard to tell the polluter that he has to clean up the polluting agent and control the operation. Should the polluter fail to take appropriate action, Coast Guard officials step in with pollution-fighting equipment and direct cleaning-up operations with the assistance of such support agencies and organizations as the Department of the Environment and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

In addition, the Canadian Coast Guard keeps stand-by pollution-fighting equipment in 50 warehouses throughout Canada, including on the West Coast at Vancouver, Victoria and Prince Rupert.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with previous speakers that the Government acknowledges that we must not spare any effort to be in a position to intervene in cases of oil spills in Canadian waters, particularly when oil tankers are involved. All told the Canadian Coast Guard has 16,000 feet of ocean booms and 150,000 feet of retaining booms in various warehouses, including the 1,400 feet of ocean booms and 52,000 feet of retaining booms already on the spot in British Columbia.

We also maintain in Victoria the complete equipment required for emergency unloading of oil tankers, and ten other pumping systems are kept in Coast Guard warehouses in British Columbia. And perhaps still more significant, Mr. Speaker, 24-odd units for recuperating floating oil are available. Besides that we have 17 boats, barges and special vessels for emergency maritime operations, and such varied support equipment as generators, compressors, radio equipment and flat-bed trucks already in Coast Guard warehouses along the Pacific coast, and we can have. . . . Earlier my colleague from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans said it is important that people be aware of the equipment we have. This gives an idea of the size of the systems and equipment available.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of all Canadians I hasten to point out that this list refers only to the West Coast. In its 50 storage facilities throughout the country the Canadian Coast Guard maintains something like \$35 million worth of pollution-fighting equipment, including

166,000 feet of oil recuperation booms, six units of special equipment for emergency unloading of oil tankers, 156 systems to recover floating oil, 150 small craft and other essential tools such as tar shovels and forks.

Mr. Speaker, the entire Coast Guard—boats, helicopters and staff—is ready to provide assistance in case of a major spill in Canadian waters, and a good many Coast Guard officers have the necessary training to direct the operations.

Mr. Speaker, we always need more equipment and we must continue our work to improve our systems and facilities. First and foremost—and here I agree with the Leader of the Opposition—we have to prevent accidents. Canada's reputation in these fields is second to none, but we must remain vigilant.

• (2110)

[English]

I would like to conclude by stating that I believe we have clearly demonstrated the Government's response to this tragic occurrence, as well as our readiness with respect to oil pollution incidents in Canada.

In my comments I have emphasized the following. The actions initiated by this Government on the Alaska spill, our safety prevention systems, are in place. Our pollution countermeasures and equipment resources are ready and available to be used in the very unlikely event that they are required.

I conclude by stating that an extensive Canadian response to the Valdez spill has been mounted.

• (2120)

Ms. Sheila Coppins (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the length of the applause on the government side of the House will do nothing to substitute for the lack of content in the so-called responses we have heard from the two Ministers involved in this issue.

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard) in his most recent rantings on the issue sounds more like an apologist for Exxon than a Minister of a Canadian Government which is supposed to be protecting the interests of the Canadian people. I would suggest to him that if a similar spill had occurred in the St. Lawrence River outside the City of Montreal or in Lake Ontario outside of the City of Toronto, this Government would have declared a national emergency instead of simply ignoring