

*Transportation Accident Investigation Board*

The provisions of this Bill still give the Government yet another vehicle for patronage. It is a system which must end. When we get to committee stage this corner of the House will have proposals to offer in that regard.

**Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River):** I would like to thank my colleague, the Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. Brewin), for raising a critical matter in transportation safety, which is the question of the spillage of oil. The Hon. Member has raised this matter in conjunction with a very serious oil spill on the west coast of Vancouver Island. He and other Members of the House know that on Vancouver Island and the coast of B.C. there is currently under way a massive petition by citizens who are demanding a public inquiry.

Every municipality, city, regional board, native community and tribal council is writing to the Ministers involved urging that a public inquiry take place. Today there is a delegation headed by Richard Lucas, the co-ordinator for the Nuu-chahnulth people, on that clean-up. He is here in Ottawa attempting to meet with Ministers about the clean-up. I would add that with the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard), the Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard) and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon), he has basically had no luck at all at this point. He is here to urge that a public inquiry be held so that the livelihoods of the Nuu-chahnulth people and the other citizens who live there are not destroyed in the same manner as those who live in Valdez.

I ask my colleague if he could comment on the refusal of the Prime Minister and Ministers to meet with these people who have firsthand experience and who will be the first line exposed to the damage created by the transportation safety problems. Why will the Ministers not meet with them, hear their concerns, and launch that public inquiry? The Minister of Transport is quite prepared to go around the Canadian Aviation Safety Board and appoint a public inquiry into the Dryden accident, which certainly is serious, but oil spills are serious too and the potential for enormous destruction is serious. A public inquiry must be appointed. The Government Members must meet with the people who have suffered the damage, who have been involved in the clean-up and know firsthand what has happened.

Would the Member join with me in urging those Ministers and the Prime Minister to meet with the delegations that are here now and those who are on their way?

**Mr. Brewin:** I thank my friend for the question. We are working together with the other Members from Vancouver Island, the Hon. Member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca (Mr. Barrett), the Hon. Member for Saanich—Gulf Islands (Ms. Hunter), the Hon. Member for Comox—Alberni (Mr. Skelly) and the Hon. Member for Nanaimo—Cowichan (Mr. Stupich) to press the Government on this issue.

Frankly, it is difficult for me to understand why the Government has not moved more quickly on this. The only excuse Government Members might have is that they are still poring over the map to try to figure out exactly where the west coast of Vancouver Island is.

However, we were pleased that the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard) went to Vancouver on the weekend. We hope that effort will have moved him closer to a decision to proceed with the public inquiry.

There cannot be a public inquiry in the case of every single event that comes along, and we on this side of the House understand that. However, the potential for major damage is so great that we should take the lesson that has been learned with relatively minimal damage to our shores and to our environment to get to the heart of what will be necessary to avoid a major catastrophe in the future.

Three or four tankers per day go by the City of Victoria through the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Each one is a floating invitation to an oil spill disaster. So far we have been fortunate, but inevitably there will be a disaster somewhere in the Strait of Georgia or in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. There will be a serious oil spill off the coast, unless steps are taken now.

The tankers that are used are beginning to age. The potential that they have for leakage increases as each year goes by. It is critical that we look at the technology for transporting oil, and that we look at the technology that is being used in barges.