

pretty defensive responses from Ministers in this House. I am surprised by that.

The Minister of the Environment talked about their newfound concern for the environment and pointed to the sections in the Throne Speech that deal with the environment imperative. He said that there has never been a Throne Speech like this in the history of Canada. There was one that just came out from the Government of British Columbia, and in fact, I thought it was a direct copy. The Government has established a task force on environment and the economy. As well, the national round table on environment and the economy has been established. I will tell Hon. Members what the British Columbia one is worth. It is worth nothing, absolutely nothing.

Nobody believes Vander Zalm is going to do anything on the environment, and nobody believes that anything will be done of substance by this Minister either. What disturbed me most of all is that at least Bill Vander Zalm, the Premier of the Province of British Columbia, in his Throne Speech, mentioned the oil spill off the West coast. At least he attached some importance to it. I want to say to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans that nothing in here relates to environmental issues on the West Coast.

The Minister talks about cleaning up the Great Lakes, cleaning up the St. Lawrence River, cleaning up the Arctic regions. There is nothing in this Throne Speech that suggests any concern about the environmental damages that were caused by the spillage of oil off the west coast of Canada and the west coast of the United States on three separate occasions over the last year. Why did this Minister not draw that to the attention of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) when drafting this Throne Speech in the first place? Why did the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard) not emphasize to the Prime Minister that this very important problem should be included in the Throne Speech so that they at least would demonstrate some concern about the environmental quality and the vulnerability of the environment on the west coast of Canada?

There is no concern on the part of this Minister of the Environment about the west coast of Canada, and that is why the issue of the oil spill does not appear in the section of the Throne Speech dealing with environmental issues. That is why we in British Columbia simply do not trust that Minister. We cannot trust that Minister. We feel that he just does not have our environmental concerns at heart.

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That is why we are up on our feet in the House of Commons tonight. It is to bring to the House that concern that has been brought to us by our constituents through thousands and thousands of letters and telephone calls from constituents concerned about the oil spill that took place on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the oil spill that took place in Alaska, the oil spill that took place in the lower Straits of Juan de Fuca and the Straits of Georgia. That is why we are on our feet now.

We are not talking about some kind of superior moral view. We are talking about a concern of tens of thousands of our constituents over what is happening to the environment. They know that the spill that took place off the West coast of Vancouver Island—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret that the Hon. Member's time has expired. The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Ms. Phinney) has the floor.

Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I particularly wanted to speak tonight because of my personal experience with the Vancouver Island oil spill earlier this year. Although I recognize the difference in size between the two spills, the frustrations of the residents are very similar.

Last January, like many Canadians, I was shocked by the television newscasts of the residents of this area trying to clean up globs of oil before it managed to seep into the sand. Particularly heart-rending were the scenes of volunteers trying to clean the oil off dying birds and off the sea otters covered with oil crying on the oil-slicked rocks.

Each day we heard more and more news about the frustration of the local people and the possible long-term effect upon the area. While these volunteers were working tirelessly, the federal authorities were slow in getting organized.

Once the authorities were eventually organized, the official report said that there was no serious problem. The conflicting reports coming from the Government and the evidence we were receiving through the media convinced me that the only way that I could know the real facts about the situation was to go out there myself and help clean up the beaches.

May I read from an article that I wrote four months ago in the Hamilton news describing my experience? This will show how frustrating this experience was.

Working my way along the beach, picking up dead birds and platter-sized globs of congealed bunker oil, I could not help but wonder what we would do differently if we had an oil spill in Hamilton Bay or along the coast of Lake Ontario or in Halifax or along the Labrador coast.