

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, January 15, 1986

The House met at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 22

[English]

FINANCE

SALES TAX ON FIREFIGHTERS' CLOTHING

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, every day firefighters in Canada put their lives on the line to protect the lives and property of their fellow citizens. They rarely get the recognition they deserve. Instead of thanking these Canadians, the federal Government has decided they are another group which should be hit with a tax. This time it is the imposition of federal sales tax on firefighters' clothing. Is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) so anxious to reduce the deficit that he has decided that articles needed to protect human life are just another object on which to gather more revenue for the federal treasury? His response is typical. He compares the clothing which protects the lives of public servants with the tools of a carpenter or plumber. While no one disputes the contribution made by those trades, only the Minister of Finance could equate life-protecting clothing with a hammer.

The tax is a burden to municipalities and volunteer firemen across the country who offer their services free of charge to their communities. Quite often they have to raise the money themselves to buy the equipment. I call upon the Government to remove this tax. Instead of hindering the efforts of Canadian firefighters, the Government should at the very least thank them for a job very well done.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

OIL POLLUTION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND BEACHES

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, on October 21 some 4,500 barrels of Alaskan crude oil were spilled from the ARCO *Anchorage* in Port Angeles, Washington. According to world standards this was not a major spill but it has shown what inadequate procedures we have for dealing with any kind of spill. Local people have reported a lack of proper co-ordination between federal, provincial, and American officials responsible.

When patches of oil washed up on Vancouver Island beaches early in January, officials did not know if they came

from the Port Angeles' spill or as a result of the discharge of bilge by passing freighters. Hundreds of sea birds covered with the oil lost their protective insulation and died from exposure. No federal or provincial agency stepped in to co-ordinate the rescue of these birds. Instead, a group of 150 volunteers tried to rescue the birds with fishing nets and get them to the Victoria SPCA for cleaning. Unfortunately, with crude equipment, they were able to rescue only a few of the birds, and of these none survived.

● (1405)

Obviously we need better methods of monitoring passing freighters to prevent the dumping of bilge. We need co-ordination for small and medium spills as well as for major spills to minimize the damage that these oil spills cause. I call on the Government to study the recent spill and pollution in order to devise more effective methods for dealing with any spills that—

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that his time has expired.

* * *

ENERGY

SASKATCHEWAN HEAVY OIL UPGRADER PROJECT

Mr. John Gormley (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the matter of the proposed Husky heavy oil upgrader near Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. The need to assess this project is understandable in light of several changing factors since the original memorandum of understanding was signed in June of 1984.

As discussions now continue between the federal Government, Husky Oil, and the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, I encourage all the participants to commit themselves to seeing that this project becomes a reality. It is essential to the economy of my province of Saskatchewan that this project proceed.

Since the memorandum of understanding, our Government's Western Accord and the Budget of last May fulfilled some of the fiscal and pricing aspects. This is especially true with the elimination of the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax. Given these changes, and the softening of world oil prices, it is vital that these discussions continue. It is also important that Husky find a second equity partner for the project. The Husky heavy oil upgrader will bring benefits to all Canada. For Saskatchewan alone the project will mean \$3 billion for our economy, and over 5,000 jobs.