

response to the review panel chaired by David Brander-Smith of Vancouver.

That review panel was struck by the government following the oil spill disasters of 1988-89. The panel came forward with 107 recommendations. I am pleased to see that in many areas the government is proceeding under the leadership of the Canadian Coast Guard to implement those recommendations.

One part of the implementation process is the bill that is before the House, Bill C-121. This bill adopts a number of the recommendations proposed by Mr. Brander-Smith and the panel. Very specifically it sets up a regime to deal with an oil spill once it has happened and to try to reduce the incidence of oil spills.

There are some who falsely say that we should not try to deal with the problem of an oil spill, that once it has happened nothing can be done. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We do agree that prevention is 80 per cent of the issue. It is very important that the government proceed apace in dealing with the recommendations to head off oil spills before they happen. We should also be aware that no matter what measures are taken, oil spills can occur. As the Brander-Smith report indicated we need to take substantially improved steps to deal with those oil spills that regretfully will occur.

The bill before the House takes a major step forward in that direction. First of all, with some minor exceptions for very small vessels, it requires every major ship entering Canadian waters to have an agreement in place approved by the Canadian Coast Guard under which it would have available a response capacity should a spill occur. It would have to file a plan to deal with any spill that occurs. As well, all unloading facilities have to have a response plan in place.

• (1745)

The bill also provides that the shippers and users must get together to encourage the development of a response capacity in Canada up to 10,000 tonnes, that is, virtually all the spills that might occur as a result of traffic within our waters. The interesting part of this provision is that it was worked out in consultation with the users, the shippers, environmental groups and Coast Guard Canada.

#### *Private Members' Business*

The program will be entirely financed by the private sector. The users will have to pay the cost of bringing our response in Canada up to the necessary level.

Furthermore, the bill will increase the maximum fine of \$250,000 to \$1 million. It will insert a provision that wherever an oil spill occurs the polluter must pay the costs of cleaning up the spill. It fixes that liability clearly and precisely where it should be, on the principle of polluter pay.

The bill also identifies the Canadian Coast Guard as the effective national authority to deal with oil spills and the prevention of spills. The Coast Guard is given full authority to deal with vessels entering Canadian waters to ensure that the crews are trained, available and ready to deal with any measure that may come.

As well the bill gives judges a much broader range in sentencing, including the opportunity to order remedial action.

Finally the bill establishes advisory councils. The committee will be dealing with various proposals for the make-up of those councils. Let me say it is a major and very important advance that advisory councils be established at the national, regional and local levels so that there is public and user input into the policies of the Canadian Coast Guard and to the implementation of those policies.

The people in our area know the impact of oil spills. We applaud the volunteers who in the past have turned out in the thousands to deal with these spills. But we say to the Government of Canada that the pace must be accelerated in developing measures to prevent oil spills and to ensure the quick and immediate response should a spill occur.

I am very pleased with the motion the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has introduced today. It provides very specifically that ship and freighter anchorages within the Gulf Islands regions must be subject to environmental impact assessments before those anchorages can be established and that there should be special attention given to environmentally sensitive coastal sites within the area.

It is part of a package that will give us in this country a capacity to do better than we have done in the past. In some areas it ensures that Canada is a leader in this field. This is an important motion. The legislation already before the House is important and I am very glad to stand in my place to support it.