

Request for Environmental Council

clear jurisdiction over those things which would put teeth into this type of an act and which would have the effect of being preventive. An oil levy for the purposes of preventing pollution is nonsense. It prevents nothing, and it provides solely a fund from which money might be derived for the purpose of cleaning up spills once they have taken place. Its relationship to prevention still confounds me, although it was alluded to many times by the minister in the course of the debate some months ago when we dealt with this measure.

The act itself is a poorly drafted, inconsistent and inadequate piece of legislation that falls far short of achieving any meaningful protection of our marine environment. The legislative inconsistencies surrounding the manner in which levies are collected for the maritime pollution prevention fund have contributed not only to the indefinite postponement of the expansion of the continental oil companies terminals in New Brunswick and its related industrial complex at Lorneville in New Brunswick but are a major factor that currently jeopardises major industrial expansion surrounding the oil industry in the Strait of Canso area of Nova Scotia.

These levies are collected each time a tanker leaves or enters a Canadian port, and have the effect of adding 15 cents to the cost of each ton of oil for each movement. For trans-shipment purposes, this is a minimum of 30 cents a ton. Where processing is involved, this could reach up to 45 cents and indeed 60 cents a ton, and when you are talking about five to seven barrels of crude per ton, depending on its weight, you begin to talk about 10 cents, 12 cents or 14 cents a barrel. When you start adding administration costs and overheads, you get perilously close to the point where users of gas and oil could be facing an increase of as much as one cent a gallon, this is not to mention greases and other products of crude oil.

To illustrate the inability of this fund to adequately protect our environment, we need only look at the current dispute surrounding the payment of costs to clean up the oil spill created when the Pan-American freighter *Vanlene* ran aground last Tuesday off the coast of Vancouver Island. The *Vanlene* was a freighter carrying some 37,500 gallons of bunker oil, although there is some confusion about the figure. I suspect it was considerably more than that. In any event, since the *Vanlene* was not classified as an oil tanker, no levies were charged against the oil carried as ballast, and hence no contribution was made to the pollution prevention fund. I wonder about that. I think anybody involved in the oil movement on the east coast certainly wonders about that.

The clean-up costs for the *Vanlene* will be borne by east coast oil shippers who contribute to the fund each time one of their tankers enters or leaves a Canadian port. Quite obviously, the Maritime pollution prevention fund is driving industry away from the Maritimes and is doing very little to protect our marine environment from other incidents of this nature.

It is interesting to note that when questioned in the House on March 20 how the clean-up of the *Vanlene* would be paid for, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) replied:

The government has paid for clean-ups in the past and probably will do so in the future.

[Mr. ForreSTALL.]

If this is so, then why not have the pollution fund guaranteed by the federal government, thus permitting a substantially longer period to build up the level required by the minister and at the same time substantially reduce the per ton assessment against these movements?

I wish to come back to the *Vanlene* for a minute. The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Anderson)—and we regret his absence from the House in recent weeks—is reported in the *Sunday Colonist* of March 19 as saying that there is no way in which we will be able to handle the resulting spill from a large oil tanker. There is no equipment designed for such an operation. A Department of Transport spokesman said that in addition to adverse weather conditions, the operation is hampered by lack of experience. They have not had to combat a spill of this type before. Clean-up costs, he said, will be in excess of one half million dollars. It seems to me that most of the machinery and manpower is recruited from private companies. It took three days to get a net around this ship.

What has happened to these fine contingency plans that we were assured were in existence? It is obvious that in the case of an oil spill anywhere in Canada our ability to do something about it is quite meaningless. There is still no co-ordinated national contingency plan to combat major oil spills, and I submit that this has been amply demonstrated on the west coast in the last week.

On July 8, 1971, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) revealed details of an interim contingency plan for coping with oil and toxic material spills, to be in effect until a national contingency plan is developed. This national plan has not yet been completed. The minister appears to be only taking credit for the work done by those who worked on the oil spill of the *Arrow* in Chedabucto Bay in Nova Scotia.

• (1700)

I have two points to make. The method of collecting levies on the east and west coast, where there is a substantial amount of oil moving in and out, is unfair because it poses the prospect of doubling, tripling and even quadrupling assessments on the shipment of the same oil. There is something wrong in principle about that. The result is that it may drive away potential industrial development on the east coast, both in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

In the first instance of the sort since the sinking of the *Arrow* in Chedabucto Bay, we have had a demonstration of our total inability to cope with major oil spills. This is not only regrettable but in a sense must be immoral inasmuch as we have been constantly assured by government that we do have contingency plans to meet any emergency that arises. I point out that in the latest case it took three days to get a boom placed around the sunken ship.

It is to be hoped that the Minister of Transport, in his conversations with the Premier of New Brunswick, will tackle the first point that I have made with respect to the levies on the movement of oil and reduce those levies substantially so that they will not interfere with potential industrial development. He could have the government fund the present plan, and spread it over a considerably longer period of time to reach the total of \$25 million or