

Pollution of Chedabucto Bay

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with a great deal of interest to the statement made by the minister, and I welcome the indication that action is contemplated to deal with oil pollution in circumstances such as the sinking of the *Arrow*. I will say that since the occurrence took place the minister has been extremely active in trying to set up programs and plans for cleaning up the pollution.

I am sure he has found, however, as the rest of us in this House have found, that we just do not have the legislation on the statute books of this country to enable us to deal adequately with problems of the kind which arose a number of days ago off the coast of Nova Scotia. I should like to make a few recommendations later in the hope that we may be able to prevent a repetition of the *Arrow* disaster.

The *Arrow* incident has emphasized the need for a complete review of our legislation and regulations designed to deal with the ever-increasing threat of oil pollution. Our whole approach needs to be revised. I am certain every member of the House would agree with me that we do not wish to see a repetition of the *Arrow* incident. One thing has been made very clear. There is a lack of planning to deal with such contingencies as the sinking of the *Arrow* despite the assurance which I received on January 14 in a reply from one of the ministers that contingency plans to take care of oil spillages had been prepared. I believe hon. members will agree with me when I say that even if such plans had been set up, they were, in the event, totally inadequate to deal with this situation.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Having regard to the lack of adequate planning and research in connection with the whole subject of oil pollution, I should like to say a few words about the possibility of a further tragedy occurring in Canadian waters. I have in mind the proposed second voyage of the *Manhattan* through Canadian Arctic waters. In my opinion, this trip should not take place. A moratorium should be put into effect until there is sufficient knowledge, information and plans to deal with any possible oil pollution. It has been amply demonstrated that we do not have any contingency plans at the present time to deal with oil spills despite the assurance, as I said earlier, that was given in the House over a month ago. I feel that until a full and adequate set of

[Mr. Stanfield.]

contingency plans has been developed that can be put into effect anywhere in our territorial waters, we should not allow the *Manhattan* to make a second trip through our Arctic archipelago.

We have set up a task force under Dr. McTaggart-Cowan to delve into oil pollution problems resulting from the sinking of the *Arrow*. Reports by the task force will help to solve any future oil spillage problems. In my opinion, such reports should be made public, and legislation and regulations based on the findings of the task force should be drafted and made law before we even consider a second trip through the Arctic by the *Manhattan*.

Last year the House passed an amendment to the Canada Shipping Act, Bill S-23. The bill initially included in section 495D an amendment which provided unlimited liability in the event of a maritime disaster involving oil pollution. This section was deleted by the Senate committee on the pretext that the Brussels International Conference on Maritime Oil Pollution would be held in the fall of 1969 and would discuss such matters as liability.

I understand that the Minister of Transport is not opposed to the unlimited liability clause, and I urge him to make certain that legislation dealing with unlimited liability be brought in at this session of Parliament. We have been informed through interviews that the minister has had with the press that Canada already has legislation drafted that will make vessel owners and operators entirely liable for damages resulting from accidental oil spills in Canada's territorial waters. I say to the government: Let us have this legislation without delay. The *Arrow* disaster should have taught us a lesson. Instead, it caught the government with its oil pollution regulations down.

There are two or three additional points I should like to make before I sit down. I feel that the whole field of oil pollution must be investigated by the various departments responsible. There are three or four clearly defined areas about which the members of this House should do something during this session. The first area is water transport. There has been a vast increase in oil shipments in Canadian coastal waters, in fact all over the world, and in this regard I think we should discuss navigation and the types of ships that should be allowed to carry oil cargoes. As far as the Arctic is concerned, ships should be specially designed for Arctic