

Oil Pollution

Mr. Speaker, we have been considering this problem for some time—

He is like the minister today, who says the government is still looking. What they are looking at is the pollution which has now occurred. He said they have been considering the problem for some time. This is a most considering government.

Mr. Basford: I thought you said you would be a statesman this afternoon!

Mr. Woolliams: I overlooked a few remarks I could be making. I say to the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs that it is difficult to be a statesman when one is involved in a problem like this and no one will come to grips with it. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development said:

—I set up the first category of restrictions on construction and we said repeatedly that final instructions would be issued, we hoped, in the course of the coming months.

Coming years or coming months. So, the merry-go-round goes on. On many occasions the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) replies by saying: "Let us have your viewpoint". We told him that we need a study. If the study is made, we will be able to negotiate with evidence and with wisdom with the United States, because they will not stop the tankers if the pipeline is built. All the talk in the world will not stop them. It will be too late, then. On March 19 I asked the following question:

• (1430)

Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. Can either of the ministers responsible advise whether they now have a definite assurance from the United States that the Prudhoe Bay to Valdez pipeline will not be undertaken until negotiations have been continued and furthered in relation to the Mackenzie Valley route?

The minister said:

Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any such assurance. This is an internal matter for the United States of America.

Yes, but it is a very important matter to Canada because what has happened has been only a taste of what is going to happen along the British Columbia shoreline. The government's own members have said that. They agree with me. The minister went on to say:

The Secretary of State for External Affairs has made Canadian concerns known in regard to marine shipping off the British Columbia Coast. I think all authorities in Washington are aware that we should like consideration to be given to the Mackenzie Valley route, subject to Canadian rules and Canadian decisions, before the Valdez decision is made, but certainly we cannot bind the United States government to await that decision.

The only binding has been that this government has ended up with no answer and no information.

On May 4, 1971, I asked the following question:

Mr. Speaker, in light of what the Secretary of State for External Affairs has said about the meeting in Washington between Canadian and United States officials, may I ask if the Canadian delegation in its official capacity suggested any alternative route or method for transporting this crude petroleum? If they did, on what study did they base their recommendations?

The Secretary of State for External Affairs said:

Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no, the Canadian government did not suggest an alternative route.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

That is the answer, that the Canadian government has not suggested anything to the United States. They have stood by, doing nothing, saying nothing, making no study, knowing nothing, and of course making no decisions. The minister went on to say:

The delegation that went with the authority of the Canadian government went to discuss the ecological dangers of building the TAPS line, which I think is the correct procedure at the present time.

It does not take much training or much brains to know that. I can quote certain figures here of other spills that have affected Canada, such as the one down in California, and the one in Nova Scotia, the *Arrow*. We all know that it does not take much training or brains to tell the United States that it is dangerous to ship oil down the shores of British Columbia. The government sent a large staff to the United States to tell the authorities that. I imagine that the U.S. authorities listened, and I imagine that they were overwhelmed with the wisdom they received. I say that if the government had taken up our suggestion made three years ago, made a proper feasibility study and collected evidence, they could have come to a conclusion as to which route would be safer from both the ecological and economic points of view. I say to the government that they might present their views to the U.S. authorities any way they like, but the United States will go ahead with the tanker route because they will not wait for a wishy-washy, procrastinating government of this kind.

My next question to the minister was:

Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. What knowledge and studies did the Canadian officials use in discussing this question with the United States officials? What study did Canadians use?—

The minister answered:

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has had considerable experience in cleaning up oil spills on the ocean.

Well, it will have a lot more experience because it has no solution to the problem that causes them. That is where the government has failed us to a high degree; it has failed every Canadian. The solution of this problem is not to be left to big corporations with selfish interests. Certainly, they have selfish interests when they are in business because they are in business to make profits. The government of Canada should deal with this matter because it concerns every Canadian and his welfare; it concerns the survival of mankind, not only here but throughout the world. The government should be able to tell us today without any equivocation or any evasion what route they plan to follow, what they said to the United States, and what hard bargaining occurred. No hard bargaining occurred. It is a joke.

On May 3, 1971 as recorded at page 5427 of *Hansard* I asked the following question:

Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Acting Prime Minister or the Secretary of State for External Affairs in either capacity whether the government officials at today's talks in Washington are expressing the position that Canada must be a formal party to the discussions on the initiation of the TAPS route or any other route?

At least, we should have been part of the discussions. The Secretary of State for External Affairs said:

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the meetings that are being held in Washington is to discuss the concerns that we have about the