

*Pollution From Ships*

distance seaward in which unilateral or one-nation enforcement of the convention would be operative. The United States, unlike Canada, wants to limit this provision in the convention to the territorial sea, which, in its case, is three miles. We would like to see unilateral provisions extended seaward to include all the waters which fall under the jurisdiction of the coastal state. This would, of course, include our more extensive fisheries zones.

● (1410)

**Mr. John Fraser (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to answer the Minister of the Environment I wish to say that as far as the objectives set out by the minister are concerned the government has the unqualified support of the party to which I belong and we wish every success to our delegation at the conference.

We are especially cognizant of the fact that some international control must be exercised over ships plying the high seas as well as coastal waters. For far too long certain states have taken the position that it is somehow an infringement of their right to the high seas to be regulated in any way. I can assure the minister he has the support of this party in pressing as vigorously as possible the Canadian position that warships should not be exempt in any way from the terms of the convention and also that the areas of control contiguous to the coastal states should be allowed to extend beyond the traditional three miles.

There is, however, one aspect which I think it proper that hon. members should consider and which is notable by its absence from the minister's statement. We who come from the west coast have seen recently in Vancouver harbour the results of a relatively minor oil spill and the difficulty, even when supplies and equipment were close at hand, of effectively combatting the consequences of that spill by containment and clean-up. There is nothing in the minister's statement to indicate he is pressing for certain other measures which are also of importance. The first concerns international navigation standards. I ask the minister to consider seriously whether or not we should also be pressing for improvement in this direction. After all, if a ship collides with another it is probable there will be oil spillage no matter how much pains are taken in the construction of the ship.

There is another omission from the minister's statement. He says nothing about pressing for international co-operation in efforts to contain and clean up oil spills. It is one thing to talk about compensation, but compensation brings little comfort if containment and clean up do not take place immediately. In this regard, at least in some situations, international co-operation is necessary.

The minister spoke of wilful discharge. Although it does not seem to be absolutely clear, I hope that wilful discharge on the high seas will be covered by the convention because danger lies as much in that area as in coastal waters.

I repeat that the government delegation has the complete support of this party. I trust account will be taken by its members of the several items I have mentioned as being worthy of consideration.

Lastly, I wish to say that if Canada is to have any moral force in pressing such terms on the conference we must ensure that we are consistent within our own boundaries

[Mr. Davis.]

and in our own coastal waters with respect to the way in which we view and treat the transport of oil by sea. I refer to criticism implying that our position with respect to tankers on the west coast is inconsistent with our lack of position with regard to the passage of tankers on the east coast.

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, before the minister left Canada to attend the IMCO conference in London the newspapers were devoid of any reference by him to the position Canada intended to take at that conference. This prompted me, about a week and a half ago, to express the opinion that Canada would take a neutral position at that conference, in other words, that it would have no definite stand to present. That prompted the minister to reply to me in the press in his usual fashion and thus completely confuse the issue. But at least it did result in the minister saying something, and we are pleased that he has today finally got to the stage of taking the Canadian public into his confidence and telling the House what position Canada is trying for at the IMCO conference in London. In respect of those matters that he outlined in his statement today, we wish him and the Canadian delegation well and hope for an international convention of a sufficiently high standard that it will assist Canada in preserving its coasts from oil spills.

There are two ways in which a nation can deal with this problem. One is unilaterally; the other is by way of an agreement or convention, in other words, multilaterally by agreement with several nations. We must never lose sight of the fact that so far as Canada is concerned the protection of our land is the most important and the prime consideration that should always underline the position the Canadian government takes at any conference of this nature.

Oil spills can cause and have caused immeasurable damage to our land and our marine resources as well as to life itself in this land. That is why we must first protect our own interests. If we cannot reach a multilateral agreement, or if the convention that comes out of the conference is not of a sufficiently high standard to preserve and protect Canada's interests, then Canada must be prepared to act unilaterally without regard for what is developed by the conference.

There is ample precedent for taking unilateral action. A few years ago this parliament passed the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. Incidentally, the minister did not use the correct name for the act in his announcement, but that is par for the course for this minister. This unilateral action has been classified, and we agree, as the finest, most stringent piece of oil pollution prevention legislation anywhere in the world. The act applies to the Arctic and to waters extending 100 nautical miles beyond the Arctic archipelago. I wish it applied to the east and west coasts as well because this would go a great way toward preserving and protecting our land from the difficulties that could arise from further oil spills, whether on the high seas or close to land.

The minister should not wonder about the requirement for unilateral action to extend whatever legislation Canada wants to pass respecting oil pollution control in so far as our territorial seas and fishing zones are concerned. I say to the minister sincerely and directly that the oppor-