

present in the House, I can say that he was not present at the oil spill on Vancouver Island.

I remember standing at Long Beach, talking to the volunteers who were working in a biting cold wind. I spoke to two people from Vancouver Centre who were there as volunteers, like so many others, because they cared so much about the environment. Our trip was arranged courtesy of the Speaker of the House of Commons and included Members of the New Democratic Party as well. We took a helicopter up to Nootka Point where we heard of the concern about the possible peril of the sea otter colony.

One of the impressions that was most vivid for me from that trip was the reality of the British Columbia coastline, the coastline on the east side of Vancouver Island and the difficulty of tackling an oil spill there, with the realities of the weather.

The Hon. Member for Skeena referred to the fisheries and the halibut. My first job as a student was in a fish-packing plant in Prince Rupert. I have seen the halibut up close and, quite frankly, I still cannot eat them.

The fisheries are extremely important and we are all concerned about this industry in our province. The Nestucca generated a vast and concerted effort to monitor and protect our important fisheries resource. Before there was agreement between the Parties in the House to reduce our speeches to 10 minutes, I had a very detailed statement by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to attend to the concerns of the fishery as a result of the Nestucca spill.

After my visit to Vancouver Island to observe the spill first-hand, I was in constant contact with the Department of the Environment co-ordinator in Tofino.

I can tell you that there was a very concerted effort by a large group of dedicated professionals who were monitoring the fisheries. Some of the fisheries were closed. Ongoing research, both from ships and by divers was carried on. This kind of effort is not very appealing when it comes to headlines. It is not suitable for 35 second clips on the evening news. However, the impression given by Members of the Opposition that there was not a concerted effort to contain the effects of the spill,

to monitor it and protect the fisheries is very unfair and very incorrect.

The Minister of the Environment (Mr. Bouchard) said that we have learned very much and will continue to learn from the Nestucca oil spill as well as from the Alaska spill. Among those lessons should be a realism about human efforts. No amount of technology, no number of volunteers or others involved in cleaning up oil spills in an area like the east coast of Vancouver Island or the coast of Alaska will ever be able to turn oil polluted beaches to what they were before. Only the long term efforts of nature and cleansing actions of the sea can do that. Even then we do not know how successful that will be in the long term.

We must understand the limits of human effort in dealing with those environmental events. Another lesson we should learn from these spills and our efforts in dealing with them is the futility of moral posturing. We are all citizens of an industrial society, as a number of my colleagues have stated this evening. We all take our cars home from a long day in the House and heat our houses with fossil fuels. It is of no gain in dealing with this issue about the future of our planet in posturing and suggesting that somehow we are not part of the problem. We are all part of the problem.

Perhaps it is too much to ask the Member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca (Mr. Barrett) to avoid appealing to emotions of resentment and rivalry between regions of this country, but that approach is not only fruitless, it is counterproductive.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate the appeal of the Minister of the Environment for an end to partisanship on the issue of the environment and the fulfilment thereby of the expectations of the Canadian people.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I was astounded to hear the conclusion of the Member's speech, when she asked for an end to partisanship on the discussion of this issue. I suggest she read the first part of her speech. She will notice the inconsistency in her statement. I do not believe the Member contributed anything to this debate.

I think it is worth while for us to return to the original proposal by the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton). I congratulate him for introducing this proposal to the House. Given the severity of the oil spill on the west coast of Vancouver Island, which affected my riding substantially and the riding of my colleague, the Member for North Island—Powell River (Mr. Skelly), and given the severity of the oil spill on the West Coast, I like