

### Oil Pollution

with them the question of reference to the International Joint Commission and he told his office here that he understood his views had been conveyed back to the United States. Some members of the International Joint Commission from both the United States and Canada are also in Stockholm at this time.

• (1600)

Opposition members who suggest that this government is not interested in the problem at Cherry Point and the oil pollution danger on the west coast of Canada should be made aware of the fact that not only has the recent incident been acted on immediately by the government of Canada but already, without any doubt at all, certain conversations have been undertaken in Stockholm between the responsible minister of the Canadian cabinet and representatives of the International Joint Commission from the United States.

There is grave concern by those who have seen the ecological disaster caused by oil pollution in areas such as the east coast about the possible effect of a major oil tanker disaster on the west coast. We are concerned that not only is more oil being moved by sea each year, but the size of oil tankers has also increased. The average tanker used during World War II had a capacity of 16,000 tons. By 1965 that average had risen to 27,000 tons, and a new tanker delivered in 1966 averaged 76,000 tons. A Japanese company has launched a 276,000-ton tanker. Other Japanese yards have orders for tankers as large as 312,000 tons. More than 60 tankers of 150 tons or more are on order throughout the world. Tankers of 500,000 to 800,000 tons are on the drawing board and those of more than one million tons are thought to be feasible. On the new 1,010-foot British tanker *Esso Mercia* two officers have been issued bicycles to help patrol the decks of the 166,890-ton vessel. If they build that million-ton tanker, undoubtedly they will be supplying the crew with automobiles to get around. I will now come to a more significant and serious point.

These supertankers require as much as 17 miles in which to come to a stop. Anyone who knows the coast of British Columbia and the navigational hazards there knows that the weather conditions, the dangerous shoals, the rock conditions, the reefs, the fog and all the other navigational problems make absolutely inevitable a major ecological disaster if oil is shipped down the coast from Valdez to Cherry Point. This is why there is virtually unanimous opposition in British Columbia to the shipping of oil by that means along Canada's west coast. The navigational problems down the west coast of Canada are bad enough, serious enough and difficult enough—but add to this the navigational chores in steering huge tankers through the Straits of Juan de Fuca and you have a situation that every expert report suggests will inevitably lead to an ecological disaster.

The size of the world tanker fleet itself is growing at a rate that rivals the growth in average size of new tankers. In 1965 it had increased to 3,500 and in 1968 it numbered 4,300 ships. In 1972 it numbers well over 5,000. At the present time nearly one ship out of every five in the world merchant fleet is engaged in transporting oil, and almost the entire fleet is powered by oil. Yet some people question why Canada is concerned about the possible move-

[Mr. Perrault.]

ment of oil tankers of vast size down the west coast of Canada. It would be inconceivable that we would not be concerned about the extent of the danger. Significant oil spills have occurred worldwide. In the United States alone they have occurred with increasing frequency—180 in 1968; 192 in 1969; 61 to March 1, 1970, and a great many more in 1971. Those who suggest there is any fail-safe system to prevent oil spills along Canada's west coast simply have not been reading expert testimony; they do not know what they are talking about.

What should be done about this? First, members of all parties in this House of Commons, without partisan disputation, should continue their efforts to oppose the establishment of a U.S. tanker route from Valdez to Cherry Point. We should opt in favour of a pipeline to transport northern oil to Canada and to the continental United States. Second, we need improved facilities to ensure immediate and adequate action in the case of major oil spills. We have taken some action at the federal level to enable this country to fight serious oil spills when they occur. As well, in March, 1971, we passed an act to amend the Canada Shipping Act.

However, as a member from British Columbia I am not satisfied that we have done enough. I ask myself what would happen this evening if a 200,000 ton tanker broke up on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Do we have the facilities to do a proper clean up job? I think not.

Members of this House now have a certain number of opportunities to travel to all parts of Canada. I hope some will use their travel privileges to come to the west coast of Canada to see what concerns British Columbia members. I would like them to see the west coast dangers to navigation there which have established many ship "graveyards" up and down our coast and have led to the loss of hundreds of lives since British Columbia entered confederation and before then. The concern of British Columbians, regardless of whether they are Liberal, NDP, Social Credit or Conservative, must be seen to be believed.

We cannot allow the establishment of an oil tanker route along our west coast. Pressure must be exerted at every conceivable level. That is why the opposition received the unanimous consent of the House of Commons the other day. We wanted to add our names to the protest being forwarded to the United States at the congressional level. We need continuing action to persuade U.S. authorities to abandon any idea of shipping oil by tanker along the west coast. And we have to make it impossible for any sub-standard ships that are clearly marginal in construction to ply our coasts.

I was one of a group of Members of Parliament who visited Chedabucto Bay on the east coast where there was a relatively small tanker disaster. I saw, as did members of the opposition, the effect that one small tanker accident had on one of the most beautiful environments in this country. To this time, the cost of cleaning-up Chedabucto Bay has been assumed mostly by the Canadian government. To my knowledge the owners of that ship have yet to pay one cent.

**An hon. Member:** One million dollars!

**Mr. Perrault:** I may stand corrected. Perhaps we have now received some money. However, it has been difficult