

Trans-Alaska Pipeline System

much oil will be transported daily down the Pacific coast, nor have they been able to receive any information as to what the destination of the oil tankers will be.

Mr. Speaker, one would have to be very naïve to think that this type of information is not available. Those who have stockpiled the pipe in Alaska know the dimensions of that pipe. They have an estimate of how much oil they will be putting through that pipeline. They know how much oil will have to be transported by tanker. For them to say they cannot tell the Canadian officials how much oil they will be shipping is sheer evasion.

The time has come for the government to take this matter seriously and to have direct talks between Canadian cabinet ministers and representatives of the United States cabinet. The government should be presenting the kind of data which will convince the American authorities that a tanker route down the Pacific coast of the magnitude envisaged will be a menace not only to the Canadian fishing industry but to the American fishing industry, not only to Canadian coastal waters but to American coastal waters.

• (2:30 p.m.)

I remind the minister that twice in the last 12 months members of this party have presented amendments to the Canada Shipping Act asking that the Canadian government establish a 100-mile pollution control zone on the Pacific coast in the same manner that Parliament did over a year ago with respect to the Arctic. The time has come to talk to the American authorities in fairly blunt and specific language, to say to them that we want this TAPS program stopped and that if it is not stopped we propose to take the necessary measures to protect the coastal waters of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, the question raised is currently of the highest interest. I have just returned from a trip to British Columbia and the question of the movement of oil from Alaska to the United States is creating presently a state of anxiety among the people of British Columbia.

I happened to meet representatives of fishermen associations and companies as well as fishermen and, everywhere, people seemed very anxious about the movement of oil. We do note also that the government is in no hurry to assure the people of British Columbia that it is possible to sign an agreement with the United States in order to eliminate any danger of pollution to Pacific waters. In fact, should these waters become polluted one day, it would be the end of British Columbia fisheries.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that British Columbia was concerned with this situation and I believe that the U.S. should have the decency to think twice before launching activities which would contribute to further pollution of Pacific waters. As I said previously, this government has showed no haste in publicizing the results of its discussions with the U.S. In my view, it is urgent that we, as parliamentarians, should know what the score is.

In addition, it is important that the people of British Columbia, as a Canadian province, be assured that our

[Mr. Douglas.]

neighbours will respect our territorial waters and be held responsible for any pollution of our waters caused by oil shipments from Alaska.

I urge the government to act expeditiously and assure British Columbia and Parliament that our rights will be preserved when agreements are signed between the U.S. and Canadian governments.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The House will now return to the question period.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

OIL

PROPOSED TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE SYSTEM—OBTAINING OF ASSURANCE BY UNITED STATES OF NO APPROVAL PRIOR TO FULL ASSESSMENT OF DANGERS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might return to the Acting Prime Minister and ask him whether the government of Canada intends to seek from the United States authorities an assurance that a decision with regard to approval of the TAPS route will not be made until the dangers involved have been fully assessed?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, that has been the intent of all the representations we have made.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister a straightforward question in the hope of receiving a straightforward answer. Is the government of Canada directly asking the United States government not to make a decision with regard to the TAPS route until the dangers have been assessed? Has that request been made and, if so, what answer has been received? If the request has not been made, will it be made and, if so, at what level?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure whether this is one question or a number of questions, but I would suggest to the minister that he might reply as briefly as possible. We have to go on to another question.

Mr. Sharp: At the present time, Mr. Speaker, hearings are going on about the building of the TAPS line and the United States government has not yet received advice from the advisory body that will be advising it. That is one of the reasons I have felt it most desirable that the full scale of the dangers involved in building this line should be known before any decisions are made by the United States government. That is why I said in answer to the first question that this has been the intent of all our representations. On the question of whether we should seek an undertaking from the United States that it will not make a decision until we are satisfied, I would hope that would be the situation but of course I could give no guarantees.