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Again, that is not to lessen the impact the spill will have in the Alaskan area and on some of the fish and the wildlife of that region. But there is work going on now by the Coast Guard and the Fisheries Department. They are tracking the oil and maintaining constant vigilance on what is occurring to weather, wind and wave conditions and the direction in which the oil is going. If, for example, either at this time or in the future there is an oil spill or if oil should come into Canadian waters I think Canadians want to know whether we are prepared. The Ministers of Transport and Environment have talked tonight about plans in place. They are not perfect. Nothing is perfect. I worked for a number of years in the Beaufort Sea and worked on oil spill plans and environmental issues.

I know that all of the efforts that the best brains you can find can put together do not necessarily work under all conditions. That is one of the reasons you spend a lot of time on research and you go through exercises to work out different kinds of situations and simulate those kinds of exercises. I want to say as well, as the Associate Minister of National Defence, that if an incident such as this were to occur, the resources of my Department are on alert and would be made available. We have provided offers of helicopter and surveillance assistance in Alaska as we did on the West Coast, and additional resources can be made available if they are requested.

What potentially is the impact of this oil spill on Canadian wildlife or fisheries resources? The Minister of Fisheries has referred to this. We do not know the total answer to that yet. We know that in Alaska volunteers are working with the help of Environment Canada on many of the birds which have been oil soaked. That is a very tragic circumstance but in terms of our own fisheries resources, the information that we have at this time is that for the salmon, the salmonid and the herring, Canadian resources will not be affected, partly because of the time of the oil spill and the timing of the salmon runs. Nevertheless, we will be monitoring those kinds of situations very carefully.

I would like to assure Canadians at this point that with the information we have now and the continuous monitoring that is under way it does not appear as though there will be any adverse impact on our own fisheries and wildlife resources. Can these incidents be prevented in the future? I was heartened by the Minister of the Environment and would take issue with my colleague

across the floor, the Hon. Member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, because I do not think he listened to the Minister of the Environment. Perhaps he has not been listening and reading what has been emanating from the Environment Department and the kinds of commitments this Government has to the environment. As the Minister has said, we have to review, as is done on a continuous basis, response plans. One of the lessons learned from this particular incident is that you have to respond quickly in the first 24 hours. That means resources have to be available. The human planning, something with which we in the military are very familiar, has to be in place so that there is an automatic response. You have systems set up. You do not have to wait for telephone calls or for people in authority. This has to be worked on.

I know that in the Beaufort Sea, as the Minister indicated, the resources that we have could be made available. This kind of exercise and simulation has been under way for years. We hope we never have to use it but you need to have that kind of plan and exercise going on in order to be prepared.

The development of technology is another point. Some people I have heard tonight have said that technology cannot assist. I disagree with that. There is oil spill containment technology on the market which is being developed. Again, depending on the particular weather and wave conditions this can be very effective. Skimmers and booms obviously have to be used in the right kind of conditions. But in many oil spills we have had in the past those things have been used. The development of those kinds of technologies has to take into account the scale of the incident. In this coming year B.C. will be hosting a major show on environment and technology which will provide the opportunity for a showcase of the kinds of technologies and the kinds of expertise available. This show is coming up in Vancouver. We need to do more work with the private sector in this area.

The Minister has indicated a review of the tanker traffic should take place. I know when I worked in the North there was talk about the possible development of an oil pipeline, but there was much opposition to that idea. In retrospect perhaps it is too late now because the resources in Alaska may not last long enough to make economic sense, but perhaps in other situations we should be looking at the alternatives to tanker traffic, and that pipelines can be a more appropriate response.