

think there is any doubt about that. The only question is when it will occur, because the ocean off the west coast is known to be treacherous. There are many severe storms in winter and some squalls during the summer, so it is only a question of time until one of the supertankers comes apart. We should try our best to prevent such destruction to the west coast of British Columbia. Our ecology cannot stand this type of damage. I support the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich in his effort to find another way, but the answer is not to extend wharfage at certain Washington ports. We should be trying to keep it out of those ports. It behooves us to find a better environmental path for oil coming from Alaska. A landlocked route would not destroy the ecology for the fishing industry which is so important to British Columbia, nor the beaches which are so important to the pleasure of our citizens. I think Bill C-37 is going in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, and I support it. Let us hope we can find an alternate route for the tankers.

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to make a few remarks on the bill now before the House. After studying the bill and reading the comments of members who have spoken, I cannot help but think of a 1,000-year old fish travelling the oceans of the world. Imagine the tales it could tell! It would tell about the advancement of our technology, and the advancement of our ocean pollution. It would probably tell of the agonies of the thousands of fish that have died as a result of the man-made pollution of recent years. Not too long ago, in a statement to the press, Jacques Costeau said that unless the governments of the world took steps immediately, the seas of the world would be dead within 25 years. That is a short span in which to witness the total destruction of marine life. What a long time it has taken to reach the present state of pollution, and what a short time there is left to rectify matters.

I should like to move on to discuss the content of this bill, Mr. Speaker. Basically, it is a good bill. The other day the hon. member for Rocky Mountain (Mr. Clark) unintentionally made a spoonerism when he referred to something "seeping through a leakhole". I think this is a very accurate description of some of the clauses in this bill. I am particularly concerned about one matter that has been drawn to the attention of the House by the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) and others, and that is the minister's authority to appoint any person to the duties and responsibilities of an inspector.

Mr. Alexander: That is the catch.

Mr. Brisco: Yes, that is the catch. I am almost, but not quite, convinced that this might be an abuse and I think it is incumbent upon the government to alter the clause so that it will not be an abuse. The other matter that gives me considerable concern is the schedules. Schedule I refers to high-level radioactive substances. I think it is up to the government to spell out precisely what a high-level of radioactivity is. I hope the experts can resolve this question in committee. It is not spelled out here, and it should be if the bill is to be implemented properly.

Schedule II lists prohibited substances and includes chemicals pertaining to the mining industry and smelting. I know the minister is concerned because provincial laws

Dumping at Sea

are different and some are weak, but as things stand these industries are in a position to dump their wastes from the land into the oceans, rivers, lakes and streams. The purpose of the bill is to control dumping in oceans, lakes, rivers and streams of waste from ships, platforms and aircraft; but there is nothing in Canadian law to control the dumping of these substances from the shore. This could result in calamity. I suggest to the minister that while some provincial laws may pertain to these substances, the control should be federal, it should be all-encompassing and it should spell out the details.

The bill refers to allowance for dumping in times of danger to life, ship or aircraft; but I do not see any reference to accidental dumping. There is no indication of the action the department could take in a situation such as now exists off the coast of British Columbia. In British Columbia there are railway cars loaded with chlorine. Chlorine is stored at a depth of so many thousand feet. That chlorine will seep into the ocean. There is no indication as to how this bill will prevent such an eventuality. Accidents at sea happen, and will continue to happen. This is "after the fact" legislation, Mr. Speaker. This bill ought to deal with problems we shall need to face if there is accidental dumping.

● (1650)

I support the position of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Anderson) who is concerned about what will happen on the west coast if oil tankers carry their cargoes down that coast. Nothing frustrates the people of British Columbia, or all of Canada, more than knowing that oil will be carried along the west coast of Canada down to the United States. I have never heard a greater degree of frustration expressed than has been expressed on this issue in recent years by the people of British Columbia. I endorse what the hon. member said: some other way must be found. We can only help our ecology and environment by the establishment of a pipeline to guarantee supplies to the United States. I see the minister nodding her head in agreement. I know, she knows and every member of this House knows that her hands are tied, that she has little to say about the ocean route of these tankers.

Inevitably, despite man's modern technology, despite the efforts of all governments to secure safe passage for ships, catastrophes will occur. Considering the enormous volumes of oil which tankers now carry, any spill may be considered a catastrophe. We may hope that winds and ocean currents will take the oil offshore, but that only solves part of the problem as the pollution will show up somewhere else. Every member of this House will support the minister's efforts to resolve the difficulty. True, I am not speaking precisely on the terms of the bill except in so far as it applies to ocean dumping.

There are those in this House who are concerned about what will happen if a west coast oil tanker route is firmly established. They have voiced their concern in the past and will voice it in future. The bill refers to emergencies, to risks unacceptable to human life and human health, but it provides for no solutions. I find that strange. What are those risks to human life and health which will not lend themselves to solution? Why was such language included in the bill in the first place? When does the department imagine it would be invoked?