

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

• (10:00 p.m.)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

POLLUTION—REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT ON REMOVAL OF SUNKEN "IRVING WHALE"

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry that we did not have the opportunity of hearing further from my colleague. I know that those who are leaving the chamber disappointed will have to watch those who are coming in just to hear me.

Last Wednesday I asked the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) what progress was being made in an effort to get something done about raising the *Irving Whale*, the oil tanker which has been lying at the bottom of the Gulf of St. Lawrence for over a year. The minister indicated he would forward me a copy of the letter he had already sent to my colleague the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald). Although I have not yet received a copy of that letter from the minister, I understand from my Island colleague that the said letter contains no information not already conveyed to the House, and that has not been an overwhelming amount.

It is hardly necessary for me to say again that this serious pollution threat is of great concern to all the people of Prince Edward Island. Last March, a long time ago, there were patches of solidified oil along the north shore of Prince Edward Island on our priceless and beautiful beaches. Happily, there were no great spills; but how long can we feel assurance that some substantial leakage may not occur? The situation is one where dependence upon good luck is not sufficient. The threat should and must be removed.

Last winter a member of the Prince Edward Island government, the Hon. Robert Schurman, was giving assurances that the *Irving Whale* would be removed before May 15 of 1971. This magic date has come and gone, but not the *Irving Whale* nor its polluting cargo. Then there were suggestions that removal would come in the fall after the close of Prince Edward Island's great tourist season, but last Wednesday the minister spoke of hurricanes in the east coast coming in the fall. Regrettably, some day soon, all too soon, he will be able to stand up and say snow and ice have come, along with other unhelpful gestures of nature.

One of the officials of the Department of Transport is quoted in a September 7 Canadian Press dispatch as saying he doubts whether the removal of the 1.1 million gallons of bunker oil will begin before next spring. If this is the case, we shall have another fall and winter of anxiety. The regional director of the marine section of the department, Mr. Weston, expressed doubt that the work could be carried out during the winter.

Since there are so many adverse weather conditions and so much of the year when circumstances are not propitious, is it not regrettable that the job was not done last spring? I do hope that a firm commitment will be given and that definite plans will be laid to remove this serious

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel).]

threat to our beaches and marine environment at the earliest possible date.

Little is now to be gained by deploring the opportunities which have been missed, although in dialectic and debate much can be said about this. The main trust should be toward early, effective action to cope with this serious and worrisome pollution threat. I am convinced that in respect of this matter, if no other, I am speaking for all the people of the province of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Gérard Duquet (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in replying to the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie), the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) has asked me to express his assurance again that this potential pollution threat will be removed and that the removal operation will begin as soon as the circumstances permit.

Over the past months every effort has been made by the ministry of transport to gather all useful information about the vessel, its structure, its position on the ocean bottom, temperature factors and data about the *Whale* and her cargo which will be imperative in preparation for a successful salvage operation. The situation now is that the *Whale* or her cargo will be removed at the earliest possible moment. Prospective salvage tenderers who would have the capacity to handle this type of operation have been meeting over the past weeks with ministry of transport officials. A pre-tender meeting has been held and the tenderers have visited the area for an on-site inspection. Tenderers are now being sought from these companies and the final decision will be made only after it is absolutely certain that the maximum amount of protection can be provided.

I know the hon. member is aware that the Atlantic region is experiencing unpredictable weather at this time, with hurricane conditions, and this is one reason why even greater emphasis is being placed on timing and the safety factor.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—U.S. CLAIM TO MACHIAS SEAL ISLAND AND COASTGUARD INVASION OF WATERS IN DIXON ENTRANCE—CANADIAN POSITION

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, earlier today during the question period I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) what position Canada took and what steps we are going to take with respect to Machias Seal Island at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, and particularly with respect to Dixon Entrance on the Pacific coast.

The comments I want to make tonight relate to the situation at Dixon Entrance because that has been a pretty crucial one and one of harassment for Canadian fishermen for the last few months. To look at the situation in its context, in 1903 a tribunal headed by a sell-out artist from England, called Lord Alverstone, made a ruling with respect to the border between Canada and the U.S. demarcating British Columbia from Alaska. That border, in so far as it stretches out into the sea, did not cause any disagreement in 1903. The disagreement was about the area in the hinterland about which we are not concerned at the moment.