

Mr. Speaker, there is so much to talk about, so many problems to deal with as far as an oil tanker route along the west coast of Canada is concerned, that late as it is I think the government would be wise to move now for some type of public hearing and try to gather information. If we cannot stop the building of the TAPS pipeline and the tanker route down the west coast, then at least we should know what we are up against should an oil spill occur. At least let us ensure that contingency measures are available to handle all oil spills, large and small.

It is with this in mind that I urge the government not to wait any longer, to move now. We have had one small spill from this refinery. One only has to examine the reports of oil spills which occur when tankers are loading and unloading at any port in the world to find that the spillage of oil is a great hazard. There is no doubt that when tankers start unloading at Cherry Point we shall see a large number of oil spills, and the current flowing north will sweep it up the British Columbia coast and do irreparable harm to the ecology and the beaches there.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I trust we will not leave it to the International Joint Commission to do all the investigating. Let an all-party group conduct hearings and bring in recommendations to this government which I hope will be accepted.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I must say I have found the afternoon quite interesting.

Mr. Woolliams: I should think you would.

Mr. MacEachen: There is nothing more revealing than to observe the House of Commons when it is not moving in its normal measured way and when there is the interposition of a motion or an activity that will derange the normal business of the House.

Mr. Lewis: You mean, when we have important matters to discuss?

Mr. MacEachen: We have had an example in the very important motion put forward by the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Rose), who deserves to be congratulated for taking the initiative in bringing this motion before the House.

Mr. Lewis: At least you have the decency to smile.

Mr. MacEachen: In addition, he is to be congratulated for gaining unanimity in the House for having the motion put, and in the debate for securing unanimous support for the motion from every member who spoke. That is a rather important achievement.

Mr. Harding: We have been trying to get it all week.

Mr. MacEachen: This is not the first motion of this type that has been put in this session. Just the other day we carried a motion, without debate, put under the Standing Order by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles); and earlier we carried, without, debate a motion put by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard). Earlier still I believe we had a debate on a motion put under the Standing Order by the Leader of the Opposition

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(Mr. Stanfield) on, if I recollect, the subject of Biafra. So this is not a totally novel procedure, Mr. Speaker.

It makes matters difficult for all parties, however, when a motion is put quickly and we are launched on a course which was not anticipated when the House opened. Since that time, the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) has offered an amendment to the motion which introduces some new material and deserves consideration. Earlier today the House defeated a motion to proceed to orders of the day. I am not reflecting on the vote in any way except to indicate that if that motion had been accepted it would have supplanted totally the motion before the House and the House would not have had an opportunity to continue the debate and, more important, it would not have had an opportunity today or later to come to a conclusion on the subject matter itself. For that reason, it was not possible to support the motion.

In view of the fact that we have had a very extensive discussion this afternoon—quite a number of hon. members from British Columbia have spoken, some on this side of the House and several on the other side—not much difference of opinion has been exhibited with respect to the motion itself, so that the debate accomplished the purpose of focusing the support of the House on the motion. For that reason I believe it might be possible now to feel that we have accomplished the main purpose that the hon. member for Fraser Valley East had in mind, and draw the debate to a conclusion.

I realize that other hon. members, including the hon. member for Okanagan Boundary (Mr. Howard) might wish to add comments, but with all due respect I believe the subject has been fully and ably covered by those hon. members who have spoken. Probably it would be wise at this point for the House to return—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, would the minister permit a question?

Mr. MacEachen: Certainly.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I think the minister will realize that I am asking him this question before he makes a motion that might not be debatable. Has he given consideration to the fact that if this debate were now terminated, it would mean that the Social Credit party would be cut off with only about two hours available of what should have been a full day's debate?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of that, and I would co-operate in any way with every other hon. member of the House to provide additional time either today or on another day so that the Social Credit party would have the full benefit of the period that would normally be allocated to them. I take that into account in considering bringing the debate to a close, fully aware of the importance which the Social Credit party has attached to their debate today and their wish to have full play. Certainly the government will co-operate either today or on another day to give them additional time if indeed we get to their motion today.

Having said this, Mr. Speaker, I should like to move, seconded by Mr. Sharp, that the debate be adjourned.