

But we cannot protect our environment only when it is fashionable. We cannot support sustainable development only until the newest trend emerges. We cannot be concerned about oil spills only when they are on the national news. We cannot only be for environmental issues until they conflict with multinational interests.

Canadians have a reason to be concerned. If it can happen there, it can happen here. We want to know how well the Government is prepared. The Government has a lousy record on the environment. We have no faith whatsoever that it has studied the issue. We have no faith whatsoever that it is prepared for the impact that this catastrophe will have and could have on our west coast.

There are about 50 supertankers a day plying those waters, Alaska to the U.S. mainland, hundreds of smaller tankers in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Georgia Strait.

The Minister of Fisheries said: "it is unpredictable, we never know it could happen". Experts have always told us it was just a matter of time before something like this would happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): When we had the responsibility of office we were always cautious of the potential danger of oil spills on the west coast. In 1972 we imposed the moratorium on exploration and development off the west coast. In 1977 we signed an agreement with the United States to keep tanker traffic well offshore. In 1984 this Government, lobbied by the industry, recommended that we allow exploration. Since the accident, of course, the British Columbia Government has extended that moratorium another five years.

Contingency plans always look good on paper. Exxon told the residents of Valdez and Cordova that it had such plans in the event of an emergency. Those residents of Alaska are now asking what happened, why didn't those plans materialize, why wasn't the State of Alaska ready, why wasn't the Coast Guard ready, what had happened to the oil consortium mobilizing that pipeline and moving those millions of barrels of oil down the West Coast, where was the strategy? We are asking our Government the same questions. What are the contingency plans if it happens at or near our coastlines, east, west, or north?

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The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has said once again that it is unprecedented. In 1972 the U.S. Coast Guard report, five years before the Alaska pipeline was completed, predicted that there would likely be an accident once a year in Prince William Sound. That was the view of the Coast Guard of the United States years before this movement of oil started.

The Canadian Government is not even sure how far away the oil slick is from Canadian waters. I ask the Ministers concerned what evidence they have that our coastlines are protected. I believe we can learn not only from the current disaster. We may have some lead time to prepare ourselves for the impact on the Canadian coastline.

We have committed ourselves to the concept of sustainable development. It is in the Throne Speech. The Minister of the Environment has a very important charge in his hands now. That commitment is being tested. I say to him that there are great dangers for us. We need now high level negotiations with the United States on how we will transport oil out of the northern slope.

[Translation]

It is not just a question of alliances, it is not a question for the head of state. Our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is not the head of state, but he thinks that he is. In any event, he is the head of government.

Now is not the time for general conversations and for paying each other compliments. It is time to ask the President of the United States how he can mobilize the U.S. Government and the Government of Alaska, as well as the federal forces on the West Coast of the United States, to coordinate their efforts. All the reports in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*—and I have read them all—agree that the U.S. Federal Government efforts were not sufficient, that the State of Alaska was not prepared, that Exxon was not prepared either to contain the effects of the tragedy.

Now, we are neighbours, we are good neighbours. We share their coasts, their waters. Now is the time for the Prime Minister to telephone his friend, Mr. Bush, and say, "Mr. President, the consequences for both of us are quite serious and worrisome. We must now coordinate our efforts."

That is why I respectfully make some suggestions, Mr. Speaker.