

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, February 9, 1970

The House met at 2 p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF
MEMBERS OF U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE

Mr. Speaker: It gives me pleasure to bring to the attention of hon. members the presence in the Speaker's gallery of distinguished fellow parliamentarians, members of the Committee on Science and Astronautics of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

POLLUTION

CHEDABUCTO BAY—REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOWING GROUNDING OF TANKER "ARROW"

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I should like to report to the House on the latest developments in connection with the grounding of the tanker *Arrow* in Chedabucto Bay, Nova Scotia.

On Friday evening last I directed that the ship be removed or destroyed in accordance with the authority granted to me by section 495C of the Canada Shipping Act passed last year. The ship has broken her back on the rock on which she is impaled and it is thought possible to detach the stern section containing the engine and boiler rooms and an estimated one-third of the oil cargo so as to tow this portion out beyond the continental shelf to be sunk in deep water. On receipt of my direction, the two tugs present at the scene succeeded in separating the stern section from the rest of the ship which is awash on the rock. The stern section now rests some 50 feet away from the forward portion, and at this time workmen are ensuring that all openings in the forward part of the stern section are sealed and that portion reinforced so that it will not leak when moved off the ledge of rock on which it is now resting. It is hoped to move this portion at high water late tomorrow morning.

At the same time, materials and equipment have been flown to the scene to permit controlled burning or other disposal of the oil in the forward section. Fireproof booms have been built to surround this portion and it is hoped to let the oil out of the submerged hulk in controlled volumes for destruction within the boom.

A newly-developed technique for assisting burning, involving the use of pellets which act as wicks coupled with magnesium flares to ignite the oil, is being tried this morning on an oil slick in Chedabucto Bay. If this proves successful, it will be applied around the hulk after the stern section has been towed away.

● (2:10 p.m.)

While the cargo involved is only some 10 per cent of the amount spilled by the *Torrey Canyon*, the fuel is heavy residual furnace oil in which the volatile fractions have been refined out. It may be very difficult to burn and other methods may be required. An improved chemical for breaking down the fuel so that natural action can take place has been developed recently and this is understood to be relatively non-toxic to marine life. It is the intention to apply this material to the extent that the burning technique is found to be an incomplete solution.

I should emphasize that this whole matter of containing and destroying fuel oil in a situation like this is only imperfectly understood. Much work has been done on it by various interests, but there are risks attached and some uncertainty of results applying to all the alternatives open to us. At worst, it is likely that release under controlled conditions and reasonable weather is a better alternative than a situation in which oil would seep from the wreck over a long period.

In all this, all resources of men, equipment and materials that are thought to be useful have been marshalled at the site. The department has had the full co-operation of other departments of government including Fisheries, National Defence and Energy, Mines and Resources, as well as representatives of Imperial Oil Limited and their salvors, and environmental control experts. All have personnel at the site, and Imperial Oil has retained the services of Professor Warner of