

Oil Pollution

since we know it would be a unanimous vote, in order that the motion and any amendment adopted might find its course to the government of the United States, because that is where it was intended to go.

We in my party were not prepared to see this very important matter dealt with in the cavalier and irresponsible way in which the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and the Liberal majority in this House dealt with it yesterday. This is a serious matter and it is literally not only distressing but disgusting to note how this government deals with important matters, totally insensitive to the needs of the country and the people. It is playing games all the time and we were not prepared to see that happen. Since it could not be completed yesterday, because of the action of the government, we were determined that if the government would agree, as it did, the matter would be completed today. It is our hope that before this day ends this debate, hon. members having been given an opportunity to participate therein, will conclude and a vote will be taken, a voice vote or any other kind, in order that what the motion requests will happen. It will then go forward as the unanimous wish of this Parliament.

As has been said by speakers who preceded me, the little spill at Cherry Point, which has poisoned a large part of the beach area of our western coast, is an ominous warning of what faces Canada if any kind of oil tanker route is developed along the Pacific coast of this country. This government ought to have acted, as it was requested by us to act a long time ago, when the decision to build a refinery at Cherry Point was first made. People who know about these matters warned at that time that a refinery at Cherry Point was an ecological time bomb for the west coast of Canada as well as the west coast of the United States surrounding that area. People who know about these matters, and I can only go by what they tell me as I do not myself know, are aware that the currents and the winds are northward, that the dangers to shipping are very great in that area, and that the building of a refinery only 15 or 16 miles south of the Canadian border, right on the coast, not inland, was an act of reckless disregard for the ecological welfare of the people on the west coast of the North American continent, not only of Canada. This government ought to have protested at that time about that refinery being built there.

While I have not made a close study of this matter, it seems obvious to me that the Atlantic-Richfield Corporation built that refinery where it is for purely economic reasons. It was the most northern point on the United States coast, right on the coast at a point as close as possible to Alaska for tankers coming down south. As I have often said about corporations, this corporation was concerned merely about the efficiency of the operation, the profitability of the operation and the convenience of the operation; it was not concerned at all with the ecological dangers of the operation. This is what happens all the time across this continent because we permit these corporations to make decisions purely in terms of the economy with which they are concerned. They took a reckless step that endangered the future as well as the present of society in this country and, indeed, in the United States at the time the proposal was made to build a large refinery at Cherry Point. This government on behalf of Canada

[Mr. Lewis.]

should have raised Cain with the United States authorities and demanded that this plan not be carried out.

Because of the importance of this matter we felt that the motion should be debated today. I want to make it clear that although we will give our support to the motion we will also support the amendment by the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), because that amendment adds some teeth to the proposal we want to make to the International Joint Commission.

• (1200)

I am of the opinion that motions moved earlier this week, on one occasion by a member of the Conservative Party and on three occasions by members of my party, were much more relevant and much more important proposals to deal with this problem than the proposal that the matter merely be sent to the IJC. I think also that we ought to have had before us something concerned not only with this minimal spill at Cherry Point but concerned with a total plan about moving oil from Alaska down the waters of our western coast. We should have had a motion, that would have the unanimous approval of this House, that we should go to the government of the United States and say that this country will not stand for large oil tankers going down the Pacific waters. That is the motion we ought to be debating. I shall say a few words about that.

Obviously, there has been collusion between the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) and the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Pringle). The Secretary of State for External Affairs made a statement that the government of Canada has asked that this matter go to the IJC and the hon. member for Fraser Valley East replied by moving the motion. That is okay. I suppose it is understandable that this kind of politics might have happened. We could have done the same kind of thing. I do not want to sound self-righteous, but I wish to underline this. I could have accepted the offer of the Acting House Leader, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald), last night that we deal with this matter on our opposition day. I could have placed a motion of this nature on the order paper before six o'clock yesterday precisely for that purpose. May I say I gave it some consideration but it seemed to me that that would be crude enough, partisan enough and cheap enough to qualify me to become a member of the Liberal party and that I could not contemplate.

Mr. Sharp: We have not invited you.

Mr. Lewis: On this motion, we must consider the matter in two areas. One is the area of national action and the other is the area of international action, because it must be an area in which the United States and Canada work together. I wish very briefly to go over the government's record in terms of legislation, in terms of regulations and in terms of any kind of really positive action. It will not take me very long to do so. However, it is a very dismal story which ought to be placed on the record.

Two years ago we passed the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. This act has not even been proclaimed. No regulations have been prepared. The government goes around the country saying: "Look at what we did about