

## S. O. 52

The Government of Canada did nothing to respond to the crisis that clearly existed in terms of tanker technology. It is becoming increasingly clear, as I think Hon. Members will realize if they listen to me this evening, that some of the corporations which are involved such as Exxon, Sohio, Standard, and others, are doing little other than acting as corporate goons when it comes to their real concern about the environment.

Briefly on the Grays Harbour spill, the barge that was being pulled by a tug on December 22 hit a sand bar as it attempted to go into Grays Harbour, and the environmental protection people from the State of Washington ordered the tug and barge offshore. Rather than having it come in where it could be safely contained, brought on shore and pumped out, it was sent offshore. Rather than even taking the normal precautions that one would expect the U.S. Coast Guard to advise them of, which is to try to curl the slick into a containable area, they went in a straight line and almost the entire slick ended up on the west coast of Vancouver Island. This is where we started to find most clearly what I describe as the "Don't worry, be happy" attitude of the Government of Canada.

The Canadian Coast Guard and the Minister said: "Don't worry, be happy, the slick is going to go offshore," even while it was continuing to be monitored as moving toward one of our national parks, Pacific Rim National Park and Long Beach, where a very large chunk of it ended up. That slick is continuing to come ashore, as we stand here this evening, up as far as Nootka Sound.

That spill happened to be Bunker C which is not as toxic, bad and persistent as the oil spilled by the Exxon *Valdez*, but it has done considerable damage. It has killed thousands of birds and seals. It has damaged inter-tidal life such as clams and near-shore animals such as crabs. Eagles have died as a result of eating polluted and contaminated materials on the beaches.

As we found in that case, it was volunteers from British Columbia who did the majority of the work. Hundreds of them turned up, and I think the House of Commons owes them a debt of gratitude for having turned up in the numbers that they did.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Fulton:** We have to keep in mind that it is the federal Ministry of Transport which is the lead Ministry. It is the Coast Guard which is under the administration of the Ministry of Transport that is the lead agency in Canada for marine oil spills.

Of course, interestingly enough, just today, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Bouchard) released the Maritime Pollution Compensation Fund report to which I will refer a little later this evening as soon as my friend digs it out of my material here.

The Coast Guard never actually co-ordinated anything, in my view. The Provincial Emergency Program, PEP, never co-ordinated anything. In the State of Washington, the U.S. Coast Guard got involved in what I describe as horizontal administration of the spill. It arranged for taxis, for dry cleaning, for hot food, and for training. It had plastic bags and all kinds of mobile equipment and so on. It had several thousand volunteers cleaning up the smallest part of the Grays Harbour spill that ended up on Washington soil. In British Columbia, there are still tonnes and tonnes and tonnes of it.

I held a task force in Vancouver just a few weeks ago and people came all the way down from northern Vancouver Island. They had taken days off of work. They had rented their own vehicles and bought their own equipment. In just one day they gathered 6,000 pounds of Bunker C off one little beach, and there were eagles flopping around in the bush covered with oil from eating contaminated foods. They could not fly. They were there to starve to death. That is the legacy of the Souse Brothers and the Coast Guard response and everyone saying "It's not really our jurisdiction; we can't really do anything".

I was appalled and continue to be appalled at how the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia responded to the real need to co-ordinate volunteers. Why were the 75 professionally trained Department of National Defence personnel from Esquimalt not out there? Why did the Government never send them out?

Cleaning up oil spills is a tough, dirty job once it gets on the beach, and that brings me to the real reason for this evening's debate, which is what happened with the Exxon *Valdez*. It is something we have to look at very carefully. If we track the *Stuyvesant* we find inadequate, dangerous tankers going up and down our coast. The U.S. Coast Guard predicted an average of two million litres a year in spills during the lifetime of the *Valdez* traffic up and down our coast. We have to look carefully at that.