

Commonwealth and some from the United States proper, from the mainland, arrived at the scene, and each was unsure as to which should do what, how much, or just when. So obviously it is an area that will require real careful evaluation, planning, and just to determine who has the authority to enforce work.

DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. WRIGHT. Mr. Chairman, this brings us to this so-called Good Samaritan suggestion that you have.

I am sorry that our colleague, Jim Howard, is not here. He made an intensive study on the spot of the Puerto Rican disaster and was telling me yesterday that one of the companies, I forget which one it was, at first had offered to come in and clean it up voluntarily and then, apparently upon consultation, with their legal officers, had to withdraw the suggestion for fear their voluntary act of cleaning it up might subject them to civil suits on the basis that they had assumed liability.

This, of course, is quite at cross purposes with their impulse to try to be helpful.

So that you believe we could incorporate into the bill some so-called Good Samaritan provision —

Mr. CHECKET. Yes, sir.

Mr. WRIGHT (continuing). Which would encourage immediate voluntary effort to clean up by, specifically, exempting this fellow from liability placed upon his good deed?

Mr. CHECKET. Yes, sir. We think this would be a very constructive amendment to the bill.

Mr. WRIGHT. It seems so to me. I think it is a very constructive suggestion all the way through. I think it bears very close sympathetic scrutiny by the committee, Mr. Chairman. I want to congratulate the gentleman on a creative and constructive approach, certainly not a negative approach.

It seems to me it does rather little good to pass a law that says somebody is going to have to pay for this if the person who is required to pay does not have money to pay. It is the old question of getting blood out of a turnip.

Mr. CHECKET. Yes, sir.

Mr. WRIGHT. So perhaps we need two things: First, some machinery to authorize and equip the Federal authority to move in rapidly and effect the cleanup if someone else does not do so, and secondly, a program of this type to establish liability, to require financial responsibility on the part of those who may incur liability, and to encourage voluntary acts of good will without the assumption of liability when the party is not the guilty party.

Mr. CHECKET. Yes, sir. We fully support that.

Mr. WRIGHT. I think it is very constructive.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will not belabor the point at this time.

Mr. BLATNIK. Mr. Edmondson.

Mr. EDMONDSON. Mr. Chairman, can we assume there will be further testimony, both on details of the "Good Samaritan" provision and also