

Guard acts, sometimes others act. And we obviously need, and we are trying to develop now, a much more systematic orderly way, so we know who does what when one of these spills occurs.

REMEDY AGAINST A SUNKEN SHIP INEFFECTIVE

Mr. CRAMER. Do you have at the present time, which I think is important as a result of the experience that was acquired off Puerto Rico and what have you—of course, we knew the perpetrator there. Remedy against the ship, however, would not be of much value, would it? It was sunk. That remedy is not necessarily too effective either, is it?

Secretary UDALL. In many cases it is not.

Mr. CRAMER. Liability does not run beyond that of the value of the vessels, is that right?

Secretary UDALL. That is right.

Mr. CRAMER. So if the ship is sunk and discharges the oil in sinking, there is no remedy, that is no effective remedy?

Secretary UDALL. Well, there may be a remedy against the owner of the cargo or the owner of the vessel who, you know, might have and usually does have other interests.

Mr. CRAMER. Well, I would suggest, Mr. Secretary—perhaps legal counsel should clarify it—in legislation as drafted, the only remedy is against the ship itself which was sunk. That is not much remedy.

Secretary UDALL. It would not be.

I think our staff people ought to look at this in terms of strengthening it.

Mr. CRAMER. We have had some pretty serious problems off Puerto Rico, and other places trying to find what can be done to dispel this oil, disperse it, so it is no longer a threat to the beach, cleaning up of the beach, et cetera.

This is a long-range problem for those communities, is it not? It has very serious impact. It is almost like a major disaster?

Secretary UDALL. I quite agree and it is a poised threat that is there all the time and it is going to get bigger, not smaller.

SUNKEN VESSELS

Mr. CRAMER. We also have eight or 10 sunken ships, sunk during World War II, off the coast of the State of Florida, which at any time, if they have oil in them, could possibly start a discharge. This bill, of course, offers no remedy in that situation.

But what I am getting at is do you have underway or do you think it is necessary to include in legislation to do the job a specific program of research demonstrations to determine what could be done, properly financed, so that if the Federal Government does not have the responsibility, not accepting it here in many instances, that there is some assistance, technically, by the Coast Guard and what have you, to assist in these problems?

Secretary UDALL. I would like Commissioner Moore to comment on this.

Mr. MOORE. Congressman, with regard to the oil that might be in vessels that have been sunk for a long time or escaped from vessels,