gency measures have been devised, and the picture is now one of being prepared for the worst.

Responsibility for pollution at sea divides itself into two parts; outside a one mile limit it belongs to the Department of Trade and Industry, but closer to the coast it is very much in the hands of the local authorities and therefore of the Department of the Environment. The report of a committee set up under Sir Solly Zuckerman after the disastrous spill of Easter 1967 advocated the setting up of a coordinated chain of command along the coast with responsibility for anti-pollution measures. In the case of the *Pacific Glory*, for example, responsibility is vested in the Marine Superintendent at the Marine Survey offices in Southampton and the overall situation, as it affects the coastline and beaches, will be overseen from an Operations Room at the Department of the Environment.

The local centres of command have been equipped with a device designed at the Warren Springs Laboratory, Stevenage, which can be fitted to an ocean-going tug. As the tug passes through the water covered with oil a wooden arrangement, which has been likened to a five barred gate, stirs up the sea and oil while detergent is sprayed from a boom on the tug. The oil is much more easily disposed of naturally by microorganisms when emulsified in fairly small drops.

Sir Solly Zuckerman's committee also recommended that a group of experts should be available in such emergencies to give advice of a scientific nature. The Central Scientific Unit set up in April at the then Ministry of Housing and Local Government under Dr Martin Holdgate is expected to provide the expertise if it should be needed.

The hope is, of course, that the *Pacific Glory's* oil burden can be removed without her back breaking, but the incident raises the question of the safety of large tankers, especially with the advent of the 250,000 ton giants. Internationally, however, the situation is complicated because both the *Pacific Glory* and the *Torrey Canyon* sailed under the Liberian flag of convenience with its attendant tax advantages. There was criticism of the thoroughness of the Liberian government enquiry into the *Torrey Canyon* disaster and the Department of Trade and Industry has now announced that a preliminary enquiry will be held into the causes of the latest incident. The powers of a possible full British Board of Enquiry are rather unclear, however, because the collision took place outside territorial waters.

After two maritime misfortunes which it seems should never have happened, it is questionable whether large tankers can any longer be allowed to ply busy seaways such as the English Channel without the kind of supervision which is now accepted in air corridors. The days when individual crews navigate their own lethal loads are surely almost past.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Oldest English Ship Unearthed

from a Correspondent

WHAT may be the oldest English ship yet traced has been unearthed during drainage works in the Seasalter marshes of Kent. It has since been measured, excavated and raised in a joint operation of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and the British Museum. The boat is lodged in thick clay some 10 feet from the

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surface in the bank of the channel. Local archaeologists called in experts from Greenwich and the team from the British Museum that recently re-assessed the Sutton Hoo 7th century ship burial site, and part of a new ship gallery under construction at the Greenwich museum, has been set aside for the find when it has been conserved and reconstructed.

The vessel was originally about 40 feet long, of which 32 feet has survived, and 8 feet in the beam. It is clinker built in the Northern European or Viking style, and has a long curving stem which was probably repeated at the end which is lost. The robust build and size indicate that it could have carried cargo in the open sea. It was presumably rowed—there is no sign of a mast step though a jury mast might have been rigged for running before the wind.

Estimates of its age so far rest chiefly on the style in which it was built, resembling in some aspects the Viking ship tradition of the period from AD 600 to 1100 in which the Sutton Hoo ship lies. The Seasalter vessel is of generally "Northern European" construction, but it is heavier and more roughly finished than was typical. It is built from native oak. This may suggest that it was built before the Sutton Hoo ship, but alternatively it may belong to the period when Viking tradition had begun to fade or was being modified by Mediterranean influence. The date may not be fixed until carbon-14 evidence becomes available.

ENVIRONMENT

Countryside Seven Years After

As European Conservation Year reached a frenzied climax of talk, the Countryside in 1970 conference opened in London on October 26. A large concourse of people, gathered in the Guildhall, had before them an array of reports on the environment which had been in preparation since the first conference on this topic in 1963. Although some bold speakers attempted to raise debate on the reports, most seemed to feel obliged to use their few minutes to air their own, all too familiar, points of view.