

Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill

mess is bad, but in a few years it will be eliminated. I was impressed by the amount of scientific knowledge we are getting out of this incident, because this is cold water and we are learning lessons in that area which can be applied some day if necessary—I hope it will not be—in the Arctic.

I was impressed by the methods of cleaning up the mess, including one developed by a west coaster, I am proud to say, Mr. Richard Sewell, who has developed a machine called a slick-licker which has become one of the best proven methods of cleaning oil off the surface of water. But when I looked at all these operations, which are being conducted at great expense and with success, I could not see any one of them that could now be applied to a ship sunk in the ice in McLure Strait, or in Prince Gustaf Adolf Sea, or the Beaufort Sea.

Possibly in time they can be adapted to such a situation, but in my opinion—it is admittedly a layman's opinion—there is not one applicable to such action in the Polar pack. Let me remind hon. members that the Polar pack averages 9 feet in depth. It is in almost constant motion, from 1.2 miles to 4 miles per day, and these waters are in darkness for much of the year. Incidentally, the *Arrow*, Onassis' ship, grounded on a well marked reef, well charted, buoyed, in broad daylight.

Mr. Speaker, who can suggest that in circumstances such as these, when we face the prospect of oil tanker shipments through the Northwest Passage, this country can sit back any longer and wait for international agreement?

How long do we have to wait, and how hard do we have to try to get it?

We tried in 1958. We tried in 1960. We tried last fall at the IMCO meeting in Brussels. Time and time again we have been faced with the fact that international sea law is primarily made by shipping nations for shippers and that the rights of the third parties, the coastal states, are not sufficiently recognized.

● (8:30 p.m.)

I can give many examples and I should like to draw to the attention of hon. members one which illustrates further that international law has not yet been able to perceive the danger of oil pollution. There are no regulations in international law affecting ships entering port. The regulations which may apply are to ships leaving harbour. Unsafe ships may be forbidden to leave.

[Mr. St. Pierre.]

In times past this was sensible because the primary interest was the safety of the cargo, the safety of the crew and passengers. Who could perceive, in the sailing ship days or even up to the time of the supertanker, that an incoming ship could pose a threat to a state? Except a ship of war, of course.

So, Mr. Speaker, Canada has moved unilaterally and has done so properly. We are opposed in this stand. We are criticized for it by the United States government—perhaps I should say specifically by the State Department. I should be interested to know what the United States Department of the Interior feels. As for the feelings of some Senators, notably Senator Stephens of Alaska, who could be expected to recognize such threats when he sees them, he is one who has publicly stated that he favours the Canadian action.

A speaker who preceded me suggested that we had obviously alienated all the nations at the United Nations.

An hon. Member: It must have been a Tory.

Mr. St. Pierre: I would draw to the attention of the House a statement made on Sunday night by Dr. Stavropoulos, the Under-secretary General for Legal Affairs at the United Nations. Mr. Speaker this statement was made on a CBC program called "Cross Country Checkup", and this excerpt is a transcription from the tape recording. Dr. Stavropoulos was asked if he thought the Canadian action in reserving our position at the Hague Court was particularly important and he replied:

No, I don't think it is particularly important, I think it is particularly interesting. It is the first time we have a reservation dealing with pollution.

He was then asked about the Prime Minister's statement that international law at the present time was inadequate or imprecise on sea pollution. When asked if he agreed with this his answer was, "I would say yes." But he went on:

I wish that this is the first step toward a general acceptance of the law, which can be very good for humanity.

There, Mr. Speaker, are the words of a man who thinks in global terms and recognizes the Canadian government's action for what it is, a progressive step, admittedly taken in our own interest primarily but nevertheless eventually of benefit to all the sea coast nations of the world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!