

Oil and Gas Act

seems that the subject matter of the bill should be placed more properly before the Committee on National Resources and Public Works. I wonder if the House would give unanimous consent to permit the transfer of this bill as it now stands on the order paper from the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development to the Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Mr. Speaker: Is it unanimously agreed that the motion now before the House be amended in the sense proposed by the parliamentary secretary?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Baldwin: No.

Mr. Aiken: I do not know whether I am permitted to do any more than say yes or no. The Committee on National Resources and Public Works now has the Canada Water Act before it, and will study it for a period of anywhere from six weeks to two months perhaps. It seems to me that it would be very difficult for the committee to handle this bill. But, unfortunately, we were not consulted.

Mr. Speaker: There might be further discussions later on during the day on the point. At the moment, it can only be proposed to the House by way of a formal motion which requires unanimous consent. I suggest that the parliamentary secretary may wish to have discussions with representatives of the other parties before a reconsideration of the matter later today.

Mr. Barnett: May I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the matter which was raised by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken). I would not want the impression to be left in the House that the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development is not also occupied with important matters.

Mr. Speaker: Has the parliamentary secretary completed his remarks?

Mr. Orange: Yes.

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the bill that has been placed before the House has been prepared somewhat hurriedly by the government. There is some confusion as to who is responsible, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development or the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. I see the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr.

Greene) is still in the House. I hope he will remain with us for a while because when the discussion began this afternoon I asked of the government which responsible minister would be piloting the legislation through the House. We still have not quite clarified that point. My good friend, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Orange) has been handling the debate up to the present, but, we have not yet decided to which of the two committees the matter should be referred.

Mr. Barnett: The minister is part of a hydraheaded monster.

Mr. Dinsdale: The reason I have indicated that I trust the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will stay in the House is there is a strong feeling that there are some fundamental points that have to be clarified during the course of our discussion today, issues that revolve upon important jurisdictional questions as between the federal and provincial governments. It would seem to me that only a minister of the Crown who has been active in whatever negotiations have taken place around these areas can provide answers to the House at present.

It was only as recently as June 27, 1969 that royal assent was given to the original act which was then entitled an act respecting the production and conservation of oil and gas in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, which indicates just how uncertain the government is in respect of these matters. In less than 12 months the government has come before the House with amendments to the original act. This is either an indication of poor housekeeping on the part of the government or of the fact that jurisdictional problems have not been properly sorted out, or else it could be, and I am sure this is another aspect, that the progress in mineral and oil exploration in the areas originally designated under the act, that is the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, has been proceeding so rapidly that additional legislative terms of reference are required at this time. It is quite true that there has been a great upsurge of interest in northern development.

● (12:20 p.m.)

I suppose this is related to the famous Prudhoe Bay discovery in the State of Alaska, which occurred just over a year ago. I want to underline that Canadian interest in this area even predated that of the United States government, as indicated by the legislation of 1969 and the further amendments