

Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill

discomfort will be nothing compared to the anger and resentment of the Canadian people if this government weakens in its determination to protect the sovereignty and rights of the Canadian people over the waters adjacent to Canada.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might ask the hon. member a question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) on a question.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member would like to comment on the fact that the State Department apparently proposed an international conference to establish anti-pollution measures in the Arctic and, without in any way delaying or weakening the passage of the present legislation and the firm stand he has advocated in his speech, whether he could reasonably agree to that part of the United States proposal in respect of such an international conference.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard): Order. The hon. member should ask a question and not ask for a comment because the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) has already made his speech.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I had not sat down, so perhaps I might be permitted to answer the question I asked the hon. member to ask me.

An hon. Member: It just appeared that way.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Of course, Mr. Speaker, I am being a little facetious. I agree completely with the hon. member. I thought I had made clear in my remarks, while making this unilateral declaration with regard to our jurisdiction for pollution control purposes over the Arctic and with regard to our sovereignty over our territorial waters to a 12-mile limit, that we should agree readily to an international conference with the coastal states of the world because while the question of pollution is a serious question for Canada it is equally a serious question for other countries. We perhaps are more vulnerable to pollution and therefore must lead in the discussions, but I would certainly support the government in making a declaration—and I hope the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) will make the declaration in the course of his speech—that Canada will willingly help to organize such a conference, attend such a

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

conference and co-operate in order to have international standards set with reference to pollution control.

Mr. Chrétien: I said the same thing in my speech.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is evident from what has been said in this debate already that there is general agreement on all sides with the two fundamental objectives underlying the Arctic waters pollution prevention bill, the economic development of the Canadian Arctic, and the preservation of a unique environment comprising land and ice and open sea.

The government has given long and careful consideration to the means by which these objectives could best be given effect and translated into legislative terms. We have considered these questions in the light of the duty and responsibility Canada owes not only to itself but to the community of nations, that is to say to mankind as a whole. We have refused to be stampeded by clamour from any quarter, and we have rejected simplistic solutions which could create more problems than they might resolve. Instead, we have evolved, after very wide ranging deliberations, a constructive and functional approach that distinguishes between jurisdiction and sovereignty and between essential national objectives and chauvinism, which reconciles national interest and international responsibility, and which will prevent pollution without discouraging development.

The problem of environmental preservation transcends traditional concepts of sovereignty and requires an imaginative new approach oriented toward future generations of men and the plant and animal life on which their existence and the quality of that existence will depend. The problem of environmental preservation moreover must be resolved on the basis of the objective considerations of today rather than the historical accidents or territorial imperatives of yesterday.

Canada has always regarded the waters between the islands of the Arctic archipelago as being Canadian waters. The present government maintains that position, and I say to my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, (Mr. Stanfield) that there is no abandonment of these claims whatever in the legislation that has been put forward here.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.