

*Government Organization*

time of this government but previously, that over 50 per cent of the oil and gas which we hope and expect to take out of the north is under water. The hon. member is now supporting an amendment to remove jurisdiction over this resource from the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

● (4:40 p.m.)

**Mr. Nielsen:** Mr. Chairman, I fail to see how the amendment impairs at all the administrative responsibility of the minister if it is accepted.

**Mr. Hamilton:** This is the key point, Mr. Chairman. When the Prime Minister spoke in the house on May 24 he said that the minister of Indian affairs and northern development would be like a provincial minister. On the other hand, he said that the minister of energy, mines and resources would be exercising responsibilities which are essentially, if I may use his word, "national" in character.

These lands underneath the sea are not provincial. Let that be clear. By international law the lands under the sea have been given to Canada, not to any province. Let us be clear about that. This does not mean that the federal government has to administer every little detail, because I am sure there will be discussions with the provinces and the territories about administration. But as to the silly argument that half the wealth of the north is under the sea, that is not the point at all.

Either the minister is to be, as the Prime Minister said, like a provincial minister or he is not. Either the other minister is to be, as the Prime Minister said, a national minister or he is not. The words of the Prime Minister are so clear, Mr. Chairman, that to try to divide a national responsibility and give part of it to a provincial minister just does not make sense.

We are not giving up one bit of the rights of the province of the future in the north to administer its own resources. They go to the high water mark like those of every other province do. The boundary of the province of Ontario stops short of the high water mark. The boundary of the province of Manitoba stops short of the high water mark. The boundary of the province of Quebec stops at the same point, short of the high water mark. Therefore, why should the Northwest Territories have more than any other province? If we are to be consistent, let us keep this bill consistent. If we are to have a national minister, then give him national responsibilities. But do not divide the cake in half.

[Mr. Laing.]

If we still want to keep the resources of the continental shelf under the jurisdiction of one minister and if it is clearly understood that the continental shelf is to be looked after by the national minister and that the responsibility is delegated to the minister of the north, then that is good enough for me. I am simply making it very clear that a resource which is the property of Canada by the international law of the sea should be dealt with by the national minister.

If parliament wishes to place that national duty upon another minister then that is its privilege. But it should be one or the other, Mr. Chairman. We want that resource dealt with as one unit, as the property of the people of Canada, regardless of negotiations with the provinces or territories in connection with administering it. We will fight hard to keep the power of administration in the hands of the territories so far as administering those resources is concerned, but let me make it very clear that the resources at the bottom of the sea, whether in territorial waters or beyond the territorial waters, are the property of the national government by international law.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Mr. Chairman, I hope that the hon. member for Qu'Appelle has helped to penetrate the lack of appreciation on the part of the minister of the point we on this side are attempting to make. I believe that the reason he fails to understand lies in the fact that even though he pays lip service to the idea, as does the Prime Minister, he does not even treat seriously the possibility that one day there may be a province of the Yukon or a province of Mackenzie. I say that because if at this moment he thought of the Yukon, the Mackenzie, the eastern Arctic and possibly the high Arctic as provinces of the future and treated them in his mind as provinces, then the distinction would become clear at once and he would appreciate the responsibility he has regarding potential future provinces of this nature. That responsibility would be on all fours with the responsibility of any provincial resource minister and is quite distinct from the responsibility he now has with regard to resources under territorial waters and the resources of the continental shelf.

That is the distinction, Mr. Chairman, between the responsibilities, and to me that is the nub of the amendment. It is not difficult for me to think in terms of the future development of the Yukon and other northern areas as provinces because I am from