

respect of native rights, as previous speakers have indicated. Yet this bill attempts, in a vague way, to deal with both, and with matters of ecology, which is another field in which general policy is still non-existent.

Surely, this is no way to proceed with regard to a serious matter. It is no way to write a bill on a serious subject. In granting a wide range of discretionary powers to officialdom while at the same time doing away with the right of appeal to the courts from their decisions, in many instances the government seems again to be abdicating its responsibility in this matter. I say that, while the government may be content to do that, I do not believe Parliament will look very kindly upon that kind of abdication. The simple but sad fact is that in the realm of mineral exploitation, as in so many areas with this government, we are constantly faced by uncertainty and confusion. Policies, whether for the short-term or long run, are noticeable only for their vagueness and any knowledge is notable only by its absence.

I know a little whereof I speak because I have just returned from another part of the north, places where the closely related issues of mining and development are of vital importance not only to business and governments but above all to the people who live there. Both in the State of Alaska and in the province of British Columbia, I found great evidence of uncertainty and ignorance. The people there certainly were very uncertain concerning the intentions of the Canadian government, and it was quite obvious that the government of Canada was quite ignorant about what will be happening in Alaska that will affect the future development of our own north as well as the coast of British Columbia.

There is no question but that what is going on in Alaska today is important with regard to the future development of the Yukon, our own North, and the type of issue that is raised by this bill. In Alaska, of course, the pipeline project has not received final approval and we are not, in respect of this bill, talking about the movement of oil. We are considering, however, the question of development of the Yukon. Even the mineral development may very well involve questions such as pipelines and their feasibility. Here we have next door to us in Alaska a large project in respect of which feasibility studies are well under way, where the route has been surveyed and where experiments have been under way concerning different aspects of the project, such as how pipe may be laid in permafrost and other problems related to permafrost.

In the face of all this, and the fact that Canada itself may very well be involved in a pipeline before long, this government apparently has chosen, if not to ignore the activities in Alaska, at least to not place an observer on the spot which would have been very easy to do. The government has chosen not to follow the problems arising from the whole problem, the solutions made or required, and the difficulties which are foreseen. The government of Canada has made arrangements for the exchange of information with regard to the north with the USSR, and I fully approve of that. But here right next door to us a feasibility study is being carried on which, in many

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respects, is of first importance to our own country, but so far as I can find out the government of Canada is not closely following this development. Observers have not been there. This, after all, would have called for some spirit of initiative and some practical imagination on the part of the government but here, as in so many other places, neither has been forthcoming.

This is not the time for me to speak about the oil situation or the movement of oil, except to say that the evidence of ignorance on the part of the government of Canada and its callousness in respect of what may be happening is almost overwhelming. Here, in terms of the oil business—I am interested in this because the same industry is involved to some extent in both areas—we have conflicting statements concerning what the government of Canada would like to see happen. We have the government of Canada going around in circles and behaving like a windmill. I only hope the government of Canada and its officials know more about the development of minerals in the north, and the environmental problems associated with this, than it knows about the problems involved in the movement of oil and the effect which the plans people are making will have upon our own country. I only hope that somehow or other this government and the department concerned are more knowledgeable with regard to the subject of this bill than they are with regard to the general subject of minerals, but I am afraid I really cannot have such confidence.

• (4:20 p.m.)

We do not know in this country whether the many possible developments are practical in economic terms or desirable in terms of the physical environment of the areas, and we do not know how we should proceed. We are certainly not using our opportunities to find out. In other words, we seem to have the worst of both worlds so far as the government is concerned. The government has been sitting by, doing little on its own. I recognize that there have been experiments, that some research has been going on in Inuvik and perhaps some other places. We certainly have not been trying to find out what has been going on just outside our borders or what effect this may have on us. Even though others have been vigorously conducting their studies and spending millions of dollars in the process, we have not even taken the trouble to look at what they have been doing and how they have been doing it.

The same thing applies to another vital aspect of northern development, and others have referred to it. I am referring here to the question of native rights, the rights of Indian and Eskimo peoples whose land and lives have already been so severely affected by the coming of our civilization to their part of the world,—if we want to speak of it as civilization—and to whom we have a responsibility. Even if someone wanted to ignore the human aspect of the native rights and consider only the legal problems, it is surely clear that one of the problems that the development of Alaska, for example, has run into is precisely the issue of the rights of the native people. It is very clear to the Alaskans that a settlement of the native rights question is essential before any real