

Government Organization

bill. What it does is to straighten out the bifurcated responsibility for the administration of the shelf and of the territorial waters, that is the resources of the shelf outside the land areas of the territories. Whatever the minister may say, this is a desirable and, indeed, an essential development if we are to have a policy of co-ordinated resource development in this country.

Mr. Laing: would the hon. member permit a question before he resumes his seat? Is he saying that the hon. member for Yukon supports this amendment?

Mr. Fulton: Most certainly. And let the minister not pretend that this amendment does what he pretends it is doing. I know perfectly well the game the minister is playing. Let him not pretend that this takes away any degree of ministerial responsibility for the administration of the resources within the land area of the territories. It does not.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, having listened to remarks made by the minister I think I should say a few words. As my hon. friend from Kamloops has pointed out, this amendment was put forward in an attempt to rectify what is in our view a schizophrenic act by the government. The Prime Minister, speaking on second reading, announced that the continental shelf would be divided between two ministers. The effect of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Kamloops is to place the shelf under one minister's jurisdiction.

Speaking on second reading I emphasized that in the future the continental shelf would be the subject of hard bargaining with nations like Russia in the west and north and with the countries of Europe to the east while the boundary line was being defined. What struck me as being schizophrenic was that the Prime Minister said that one minister would have responsibility for the shelf north of an arbitrary line while another would have responsibility south of that line. It is my firm belief that responsibility for dealing with foreign powers and for developing policy with respect to the continental shelf should be under one minister.

Had the government been content to leave the whole of the responsibility with the minister of northern affairs there would, I am sure, have been less objection taken here. This is the position adopted by the hon. member for Yukon. He was trying to preserve the resources of this area under the

[Mr. Fulton.]

control of the northern development section of the government. Administratively we want to strengthen the minister of northern affairs. But since there is to be a division of responsibility between the two ministers, then at least let us put responsibility for the continental shelf under one or the other.

• (3:50 p.m.)

This could be done without reducing the power of the minister one iota under his part of the bill because there is nothing in that part which precisely implies that the continental shelf will be under his department. We simply had a statement by the Prime Minister on second reading, and under the Transfer of Duties Act it can be placed anywhere without statutory enactment.

What we are trying to do by this amendment is to put into clear, statutory language the fact that we want one minister to have charge of the continental shelf. The continental shelf is in two parts, the territorial section which runs from high water mark to three miles offshore and, second, that part of the bottom of the sea which is beyond the three mile limit and extends halfway across the Arctic, the Atlantic and the Pacific, as far as our jurisdiction will go when these areas are finally divided. What we are trying to do is give constructive help to the government so that there will be one minister to whom we can address questions about the behaviour of the government on continental shelf policy.

That is the essence of our amendment. If any one minister had this responsibility I think that would be satisfactory to most of us. As I pointed out on second reading, I thought from the words of the Prime Minister that the workings of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources were being cut down to a provincial government type operation and I stated that I was a little bit frightened about the personality who was going to look after the other department which the Prime Minister called "national". To keep the legislation itself coherent and logical I suggest that these amendments make sense. There is another matter I intend to raise but I think it will come up more properly after a vote is taken on this amendment.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, I had intended to speak earlier but I think my remarks will apply equally well to the amendment and to the bill. I have gone back to the statement made by the Prime Minister on second reading at the pages referred to by the hon. member for Kamloops. It concerns