

Oil and Gas Act

information must be forthcoming before the bill can properly be considered. The amendment suggests some other course be followed, namely that a previously introduced report on sovereignty should be disposed of before reading the present bill a second time. I would think that this is the ultimate reason for accepting the amendment. We have before the House now certain questions of sovereignty over Canada's northland with which the House has not dealt, and about which there has been a good deal of controversy. The matter has been discussed; a report has been laid before the House previously but not concurred in.

The bill we are considering hinges very largely on the question of sovereignty in the north, since some of its provisions define the outer limits of Canadian sovereignty. In our opinion this bill derogates from Canadian sovereignty in the north; this opinion has been expressed hitherto and will be further expressed during the debate.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, fundamentally this amendment seeks to have the bill not now read a second time but delayed until the report on sovereignty has been dealt with. It is, in fact, a dilatory amendment that would force the bill to follow another House order in terms of priority. For those reasons, I think this is specifically a case of a properly reasoned amendment being presented to the House in order to delay second reading of a bill until a certain event has taken place and another order of the House has been considered and disposed of.

● (2:10 p.m.)

It has been held on previous occasions that a reasoned amendment may be quite lengthy in its preamble, provided that in substance the essence of the amendment is to delay the reading of the bill. This is not in the time honoured tradition of a three months or a six-month hoist, but it is most definitely a motion of that type which delays second reading until certain things have been dealt with by the House. I think it is a perfectly straightforward and proper amendment on second reading. I suggest it should be accepted.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I would have entered the debate were it not for the remarks of the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken). I believe it is very important, in the interests of Canada, to make two points. In the first place, there has

[Mr. Aiken.]

not been any contest by any party outside of the country or any doubt on the part of the government of Canada about our claim to the continental shelf. In fact, the position has been the very opposite; that is, that the continental shelf whether in the Arctic or anywhere else adjacent to Canada is under the complete sovereignty of the government of Canada. I say this because it relates to the relevancy of the amendment to this particular bill and because I think it is important to declare it here again, as it has been declared unequivocally before, so that the remarks of the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka do not prejudice Canada's interest, that we do not acknowledge in any sense the jurisdiction of any other state with regard to the continental shelf, the subject matter of this particular bill.

I would refer you, Mr. Speaker, to clause 3 of the bill which deals in express terms with the submarine areas adjacent to the coast of Canada to a water depth of 200 meters or beyond. I affirm here, on behalf of the government and Canada, that there is no accuracy in what the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka said when he suggested there is any doubt about Canada's exclusive jurisdiction there.

An hon. Member: Read the bill.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I refer to clause 3, and emphasize the fact that in this bill we are talking about the continental shelf.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, are we, under the guise of a point of order, to be permitted to debate Canada's sovereignty? I thought we had a point of order before the House and not the substance of the bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must say I am developing the same misgivings. I would invite the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald), now having made the opening statement, to discuss the procedural question before the Chair at the moment.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would say in respect of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that I am surprised he is joining with the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka in giving away Canada's clear rights in the north.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have said nothing about the substance and I did not intend to say anything about the procedural point, but I insist that