

Canadian Sovereignty in Arctic

be an important factor in the general development of northern Canada and as such it will, of course, be encouraged rather than restricted by Canada.

[English]

For these reasons the Canadian government has welcomed the *Manhattan* exercise, has concurred in it and will participate in it. The oil companies concerned and the United States Coastguard have consulted with appropriate Canadian authorities in the planning of the operation. The government will support the trials with the Canadian Coastguard icebreaker *John A. Macdonald*, as already indicated, and will also provide aerial ice reconnaissance and assume responsibility for the co-ordination of such reconnaissance. The government has also selected and appointed an official Canadian government representative on board the S.S. *Manhattan* who will act as technical adviser and as co-ordinator of Canadian support for the operation.

• (2:20 p.m.)

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am a little puzzled by the length of the statement and the content of the statement made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), with one exception, in that it does not seem to take matters any farther than the ground he had previously covered, and I find somewhat disturbing the comment he has made with regard to the waters between the northern islands.

The Prime Minister refers to positions taken by previous governments and quotes the then minister of northern affairs in a statement made in 1958, laying claim to the islands and the waters between the islands and the areas beyond. I cannot help but wonder whether the effect of the statement made by the Prime Minister this afternoon is to abandon that claim which was asserted previously, leaving the matter strictly on the basis of following scrupulously what the Prime Minister refers to as the principles of international law, which principles are not always as clear as they might be.

I wonder whether this is the attitude that the government of Canada followed when it decided to extend Canadian jurisdiction over our seas. At that time the government of Canada did not set out to follow scrupulously the principles of international law, and of course other governments, for example the government of Iceland, have not done so.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do not rise to argue about the principles of international law but simply to raise the question of whether the Prime Minister in effect has abandoned a position asserted by previous Canadian governments, and to ask what is the reason for this abandonment if my interpretation is correct. Further, Mr. Speaker, if my interpretation is correct I think this will be regarded by the Canadian people as a matter of rather keen disappointment.

Sir, I would hope that the government would reconsider and bear in mind the fact that the principles of international law are not necessarily all that clear. At least the government should assert our position vigorously and aggressively. As I say, I am disturbed by the manner in which the Prime Minister seems to have abandoned the position taken by previous governments with regard to the assertion of our sovereignty.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all members welcome the Prime Minister's statement asserting Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic regions and his intention to maintain that sovereignty. I would feel happier if the statement of the Prime Minister with reference to the waters between the islands of the Arctic archipelago had been more forthright. It seems to me that if there is uncertainty with respect to international law concerning these areas, the Canadian government would be well advised to state its sovereignty and allow any other countries that wish to dispute it to refer the matter to whatever international court or international jurisdiction exists, for a judgment on it. It seems to me that if the Canadian government leaves this matter in an indefinite state we are almost inviting someone else to suggest that we do not have jurisdiction, and that this is a question upon which we are prepared to compromise. I think the Canadian government ought to make its position clear beyond any shadow of doubt.

It is not only important that we categorically state our sovereignty over the Arctic regions, but we also remember that this parliament has a responsibility with reference to the resource development of those regions. A great part of the settled areas of Canada is already under the control of foreign oil companies and foreign investors. In many cases this is because provincial governments do not have the necessary funds or expertise to