



CANADA'S ARCTIC SUPREMACY

The Prime Minister made the following statement to the House of Commons on May 15:

I have already informed the House that Canada's sovereignty over its Arctic regions, including the islands of the Arctic archipelago, is well established and that there is no dispute concerning this matter. No country has asserted a competing claim; no country now challenges Canada's sovereignty on any other basis; and many countries have indicated in various ways their recognition of Canada's sovereignty over these areas. The Government is not aware of any maps allegedly disputing Canadian sovereignty over certain Arctic lands. I can assure the House that if any such maps do exist they have no official standing and do not affect Canada's position in any way. The Arctic mainland and islands form an integral part of Canada and we have extended to them the administrative, legislative and judicial framework which applies to all parts of Canada.

With reference to offshore resources in the Canadian Arctic, as elsewhere, the Geneva convention on the Continental Shelf provides that the coastal state exercises over the continental shelf sovereign rights for the purposes of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources. These sovereign

rights do not depend on occupation or on any express proclamation. No one may explore or exploit the continental shelf off any of our shores without our express consent. Canada's sovereign rights over the continental shelf in the Arctic follow from Canada's sovereignty over the adjacent lands, and again there is no dispute on this matter. No country has asserted a competing claim to the resources in question; no country has challenged Canada's claim on any other basis, and none can do so under international law. Foreign companies carrying out exploration activities on the continental shelf in Canada's Arctic areas operate under Canadian permit and licence and, in so doing, expressly recognize Canada's sovereign rights. The same is true, of course, of foreign oil companies operating on any of our lands in the Arctic or elsewhere.

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT ARCTIC WATERS

With respect to the waters between the islands of Canada's Arctic archipelago, it is well known that in 1958 the then Minister of Northern Affairs stated the Canadian position as follows:

"The area to the north of Canada, including the islands and the waters between the islands and areas