

Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill

Arctic Islands, where will the 12-mile limit begin? Will the line start at the outer limits of all the Arctic Islands, since the minister has said he would not draw lines around the inner limits? Surely, the bill will apply in the Arctic?

• (4:50 p.m.)

Mr. Sharp: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There is no limitation on where the territorial waters would lie. There may be territorial waters around the Arctic islands and along our coasts. I doubt very much, however, whether the government will fill in all the gaps as yet. The hon. gentleman knows, for example, that we have not drawn in lines within the St. Lawrence and the reason that we have not drawn those lines is that we do not want to compromise our position as to the status of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on Bill C-202, which is one of the three bills recently introduced relating to the sea and our territorial limits, I cannot help but note the real and necessary concern of the government for the establishment of pollution controls in the waters adjacent to our shores.

In recent years the official opposition has carried on a vigorous campaign in the House of Commons, urging the government to make a clear and unqualified declaration of Canada's sovereignty over the lands and waters of the Canadian Arctic. This campaign increased in intensity when it became clear that the government itself had sown the seeds of doubt in Canada and the international community by hedging, waffling and refusing to take a stand on this issue.

Mr. Perrault: Nonsense.

Mr. Crouse: The hon. member who makes many of his contributions from his seat says this is nonsense.

An hon. Member: He also makes very good speeches.

Mr. Crouse: He may make very good speeches, but he said this was nonsense. I will answer him in a minute. The campaign increased in intensity when it became clear, as I said, that the government was waffling on this issue. The Arctic region, so long regarded as Canadian territory by everyone, was about to be lost through default by this government.

Concern over Canadian rights in the Arctic was expressed at the time of the experimental voyage through the Northwest Passage of

[Mr. Aiken.]

the giant Humble Oil tanker *Manhattan*. This concern came to a head when the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, comprised of Members of Parliament who had made a close study of this issue, recommended that the government claim sovereignty over northern lands and waters which traditionally had been considered as belonging to Canada. What happened? The government resisted every effort to have this committee report brought before the House for discussion until the Progressive Conservative Member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk) eventually won the right to debate a motion that the House concurred in the committee's report. Naturally, it was hoped at this time that the government would end the uncertainty by declaring our sovereignty over our northern archipelago, in keeping with the committee's recommendations. And what happened again? The motion was talked into adjournment by government supporters.

I have been asked, Mr. Speaker, why the members of the official opposition take such a strong stand on the question of Canadian sovereignty in the north. I can only reply that it stems from our threefold concern which cannot be brushed aside by the government's indifference. By our declaring sovereignty over our northern lands and waters, Canadian citizens in the north will be protected from exploitation. By our declaring sovereignty over our northern lands and waters, development in the Canadian north will remain in the hands of the Canadian people under the control of the Canadian government. By declaring sovereignty over our northern lands and waters, we will have the right to prevent an ecological disaster that could affect the people of this nation and, indeed, the whole world.

The bill before us refers many times to the Canadian Arctic, but at no time does it specifically define what is meant by the Canadian Arctic. In my opinion the Canadian Arctic should be clearly defined. There are no teeth in this legislation which spells out our sovereign rights to the waters and the islands as listed on the map called "Canada's Arctic Islands" which is published by the Canadian Hydrographic Service through the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. All these individual islands in Canada's archipelago are named; they stretch right up to the Lincoln Sea in the Arctic Ocean and the names are as picturesque as the islands are numerous. They include Queen Elizabeth Island, Ellesmere Island, Borden Island, Mac-