

Request for Map of Canadian Arctic

I believe that the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources does have a map such as is requested in this notice of motion, indeed, it may have several showing exactly the area which Canada claims.

We have made one type of claim under the bill concerning the pollution of Arctic waters. We have made another kind of claim under the bill extending our territorial sea to 12 miles. We have never completely implemented the previous law concerning the establishment of baselines under the Fisheries Act amendments some years ago. We have passed the oil and gas conservation and production bill which purports to apply only to waters of a certain depth and a certain distance from the shore. Under that bill, regulations may be made in relation to the production of gas and oil. This is a subject which I believe we are to discuss again at eight o'clock tonight, so I do not propose to go into it now. I am merely pointing out that the series of laws the government has proposed to Parliament in this session, and I have mentioned three of them, have all approached our claim to the Arctic in a different way, one at 100 miles, one at 12 miles and one at sea depth. None of these statutes or proposals represents our total claim to the Arctic. We have not made one solid claim of sovereignty to the whole Arctic area.

I think the government has done a disservice by this type of approach. We certainly are not condemning the government for doing something about pollution or for extending the areas over which we are to exercise some regulation. But even the bill to control pollution does not define accurately the limits from which the 100 miles is to be measured. Our main concern, as is quite well known, is for the total claim of Canada to waters between the Arctic Islands.

I think that map is there, Mr. Speaker. I think it has been in the files of the department for many, many years. My friend, the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) had a copy of it here when we were debating another bill, issued 75 years ago, I believe. We have also had other maps displayed from time to time. I think the motion which is being brought forward will force the government to come out and clarify the position it is taking concerning the Arctic Archipelago. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I support the motion.

An hon. Member: Question.

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to belabour this

subject. It sounds like a fairly simple proposal, certainly the issue is quite clear. We are not talking about the government producing a map of the waters of any other country, nor are we suggesting a world wide map. We are not suggesting the government publish a paper showing that section of the Arctic claimed by Russia. We are just speaking of our waters.

This, it seems to me, is a fairly elementary proposal and I cannot see why the government should take exception to it. I have been on the Indian Affairs and Northern Development Committee and have discussed the idea of Arctic sovereignty with other members. I realize that they too, are basically in agreement with the territory claimed by Canada. We voted unanimously in the House a short time ago in favour of a bill dealing with pollution in the Canadian Arctic. I suggest it seems reasonable that we should print a map showing the area we are talking about, especially if the government is really serious in its desire to define these waters. A map would clearly show other countries the waters in which we are vitally interested. It could guide them in their actions. I think I will leave it at that.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the government has already indicated that no maps have yet been issued delimiting the extent of Canada's Arctic waters. The government, however, has done more than that. It has introduced legislation making it clear that Canada will exercise the necessary control over the waters extending up to 100 miles from Canada's Arctic coasts in order to ensure that the Arctic environment is preserved from the ravages of pollution.

The government has done even more than this. It has also introduced legislation which will extend Canada's territorial sea from three to twelve miles. That legislation, as the government has pointed out, will have important implications for the Northwest passage. It is known, of course, that the United States regards the waters of the Northwest passage beyond three miles from shore as high seas. With the establishment of the 12-mile territorial sea by Canada, the effect on the Northwest passage is that, under any sensible view of the law, Barrow Strait, as well as Prince of Wales Strait, are subject to complete Canadian sovereignty. Whether or not anyone may wish to allege that other waters