

Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill

growing problem of pollution affects not only that part of Canada, but it affects the environment of the world as well.

• (3:00 p.m.)

As I listened to the discussion this afternoon it occurred to me that the thinking of Canadians, Members of Parliament, and particularly the members of the Liberal government, has come a long way during the past ten years. Only ten years ago, for example, there was on the part of the Liberal Party no great interest in the economic potential of the Canadian Arctic. They regarded the emphasis of the Conservative government of that day as a misplacement of priorities. The same applies, and I can say this fairly, with respect to the general problem of pollution. I recall when this party moved in 1964 the following motion of non-confidence in the government, in the days when supply motions were permitted in the House:

This house condemns the neglect of the government in failing to establish a co-ordinated national water policy and in ignoring the imminent national crisis in water resources management, which is evidenced by the critical low water levels of the great lakes and other national waters, the increasing pollution of national waters, and the urgent necessity of conserving water resources for the benefit of national resource development in Canada—

I remember that the bored response to that motion of only six years ago was to the effect that with all the other burning questions of great priority, why was the Conservative opposition wasting its substance on a colourless subject like water? Today we are all aware that there is a major crisis in controlling and preserving our water resources. In 1964 we were perhaps concerned more with political pollution than with environmental pollution.

Mr. Baldwin: Political pollution is much worse now.

Mr. Dinsdale: This is a problem with which the people of Canada will have to deal: unfortunately, it is beyond the capacity of members of the opposition. In due course the people of Canada will have their opportunity because we still have free elections in this country.

We are supposed to be in great confrontation with the Americans over this unilateral declaration on the part of the Canadian government respecting the control of pollution in the Arctic. There would be no confrontation—I do not want to belabour this point because the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) and

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

other spokesmen for this party have demonstrated the case beyond any shadow of doubt—and there would be no jurisdictional dispute if the government would accept the simple responsibility of declaring in no uncertain terms the principle of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. This has been done by all Canadian governments since Confederation. I do not have to enumerate the legal precedents which have been quoted to support this point.

Perhaps politicians have been quoted most frequently during the course of the debate. Each of our Prime Ministers has been quoted with the exception of the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). In addition, some officials of the Canadian government have reinforced the statements of the political leaders of the nation. We are living in a day and age when the power of the public administration is a growing and formidable one. Sometimes the viewpoint of the public administrators are of equal force, if not more so, than the public expressions of the political leaders.

I have here a statement which was reported in the Canadian Yearbook of International Law, 1968. In an article entitled "Innocent Passage in the Arctic," by A. Donat Pharand, we find these words:

Ivan Head of the University of Alberta, writing at a time when he was in the Canadian Department of External Affairs, was much less doubtful about the legal nature of those waters and the Canadian policy relating thereto. He wrote in the following terms: "Canada regards the water between the islands as Canadian territorial waters, and this claim has been recognized by the United States. Prime Minister St. Laurent reported to the House of Commons in 1957 that United States vessels servicing DEW line stations are required to apply to Canada for waivers of the provisions of the Canada Shipping Act before proceeding."

That is the end of the quotation of Professor Ivan Head, as he was in those days. I do not know why there is so much uncertainty in the bosom of the government in respect of this matter. If there is no uncertainty concerning Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic archipelago and the waters in between, there is no problem with respect to exercising our responsibilities in matters of pollution. Why all the beating of the breasts and the feeling that we have to reinforce our position in order to beat off any confrontation by the United States? We have not been able to get the documents from the government of Canada, but we do have a copy of the statement that was delivered in Washington on April 15, 1970. The statement reads, at page 2, paragraph 3:

Moreover, the United States is acutely aware of the peculiar ecological nature of the Arctic region,