

Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill

Indeed, the United States Congress went so far as to give a direction to the expedition that they were to cast about and see what lands up there were still up for grabs, to use the terminology of the Prime Minister. When some Members of Parliament heard of this plan, they raised the question in the House of Commons. I will be referring to the debates of 1925 in a moment. The upshot of that debate was an answer in the affirmative. It stated very positively that all land between the 60th meridian and the 141st meridian straight up to the Pole was Canadian territory. They asked how the Americans could then go through these waters and over these lands, overflying Canadian territories, without some kind of a permit or, as it was put in the debate, without asking permission. This question of asking permission certainly has a very relevant bearing with respect to the voyages of the *Manhattan* recently. The answer in the Canadian Parliament at that time was that there could be no MacMillan-Byrd expedition unless there was permission granted.

● (12:40 p.m.)

If MacMillan had asked permission, permission would probably have been granted, since the request itself would indicate acknowledgment of Canadian ownership. The Canadian newspapers of the day seized upon this debate and broke out in an angry rash of protests. If it were policy in 1925, incidentally under a Liberal government, that permission had to be obtained for an expedition of the size and importance of the MacMillan-Byrd expedition, why has government policy changed so as not to require the obtaining of permission when the same country sends the same kind of expedition in the shape of the *Manhattan*? MacMillan did, in fact, obtain permission from the Danish government to base his expedition on Greenland. But he made no attempt to get in touch with the Canadian government. Again, Bernier's work comes sharply into focus in the manner in which he insisted upon Canadian sovereignty in our Arctic.

The MacMillan-Byrd expedition proceeded by vessel, with the intention of over-flying Canadian territory. The ship was anchored in the proximity of one of our Arctic islands in Etah harbour when Bernier came on the scene in the course of one of his patrols. He visited MacMillan on the evening of his arrival. The two men had dinner and a very pleasant conversation. Eventually, they got round to the right of the MacMillan-Byrd expedition to be where it was and carry on as it was

[Mr. Nielsen.]

doing. Bernier pointed out the danger of over-flying Canadian territory at that time of the year, having regard to weather conditions, and gently suggested that the expedition should turn around and go home. A couple of days later, that is exactly what they did. As a result of this mission, carried out with great friendliness at that time, MacMillan was convinced of Canadian ownership and when he returned to the north in subsequent years he was very careful to take out a licence obtained from the R.C.M.P. for a token payment. I commend this account of Bernier's life to the Prime Minister if he has any doubt about the right of Canada to assert sovereignty over the Arctic, as it appears he has.

I wish, now, to refer briefly to Bernier's own autobiography. Those interested in our claim to Arctic sovereignty will be able to find it in the Parliamentary Library. Entitled "Master Mariner and Arctic Explorer", it is a narrative of 60 years at sea from the logs of Captain Bernier, and it was printed by Le Droit in 1939. An interesting feature of Captain Bernier's life is that he was one of those in the Province of Quebec who bought his wife at an auction sale conducted in that province. I did not know this practice prevailed anywhere in Canada. His wife brought with her a dowry from King Louis of France—Louis XV, I guess it was. Anyway, she brought with her a dowry of \$12.50. I was surprised to learn that this practice prevailed in Canada. The patrols which Bernier instituted and carried on were the result of co-operation between Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Robert Borden and the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen. This policy of licencing the users of our Arctic waters was one which both governments of the day endorsed.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the important event which is about to occur at ten minutes to one, an event of international interest, I wonder whether I might call it one o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: Very thoughtful.

At thirteen minutes before one o'clock, the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct an error that I made before the adjournment with regard to the bartering of brides in Quebec. It was under the reign of