

*Canadian Sovereignty in Arctic***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[Translation]

CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY**POSITION RESPECTING ARCTIC ARCHIPELAGO,
CONTINENTAL SHELF AND INTER-
ISLAND WATERS**

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, honourable members will recall my indicating recently that the government would make a policy statement regarding the question of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. I should like to make that statement at this time.

[English]

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

[Mr. McGrath.]

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.

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 beyond, are looked upon as our own, and there is no doubt in the minds of this government, nor do I think was there in the minds of former governments of Canada, that this is national terrain.

[Translation]

It is also known that not all countries would accept the view that the waters between the islands of the archipelago are internal waters over which Canada has full sovereignty. The contrary view is indeed that Canada's sovereignty extends only to the territorial sea around each island. The law of the sea is a complex subject which, as can be understood, may give rise to differences of opinion. Such differences, of course, would have to be settled not on an arbitrary basis but with due regard for established principles of international law.

I should point out that the legal status of the waters of Canada's Arctic archipelago is not at issue in the proposed transit of the Northwest Passage by the ships involved in the *Manhattan* project. As the house is aware, this project is sponsored by a number of oil companies and consists of a trial run through the Northwest Passage and into the Beaufort Sea off Alaska by the ice-strengthened tanker *Manhattan*, accompanied by ice-breakers of the Canadian and US Coast Guards. The exercise is intended to test the feasibility of transporting oil by this method from Alaska's Prudhoe Bay to the northeastern United States and perhaps to Europe.

Needless to say the trials of the *Manhattan* may be of considerable significance for the development of Arctic navigation. Such development is consistent with both Canadian and international interests, and I do not see that any conflict need arise between Canada's national policy and international responsibility in this connection. Arctic navigation will