



The Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker John A. Macdonald in arctic waters

close to \$2 billion in the next 10 years. The company takes out a lease that covers half the permit area. The other half reverts to the state. Only a Canadian-incorporated company can obtain these extraction leases.

WHEN a well is at the exploration drilling stage, daily contact is maintained with Canadian federal authorities to ensure that all the regulations are being met. Canadian government engineers come aboard at critical phases of the operation. Canada has exploration permits out on more than 1 million square miles of seabed, the bulk of it on the Atlantic coast and in the Arctic.

Protecting the marine environment from oil and gas blowouts is considered all-important. From the deck of the oil rig, high above the surface of the sea, the bit

travels down through casing that leads to blowout prevention controls on the seabed below. The whole apparatus is locked in a column of concrete running half a mile down into the ocean floor.

Now the question is: who owns the seabed? Under an agreement signed at the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1958, each country can go after the mineral resources on its continental shelf to the limits of exploitability. When that was agreed to, we didn't have the means to drill for oil in very deep water that we now have. Hence the need for a third law of the sea conference, scheduled to be held next April (a second conference was held in 1960).

Canada's stand is that the whole central part of the ocean seabed should be for all to use, that it should belong to no country.

We adhere to the exploitability clause of the UN agreement but we don't think that gives us the right to march right out to the centre of the ocean and drill for oil and the other minerals simply because we may have the technical capabilities.

Alan Beesley says the maritime nations have begun a major overhaul of the law of the sea. He says the big development is that they're ready to reconsider their rights and obligations. What is involved is a sacrifice or sovereignty in the common interest. Similar concessions are being made in connection with the use of outer space and ecology. An example of the preparatory work towards the formulation of a new law of the sea is the London conference on Ocean Dumping in November, 1972. The work of this and other meetings and the