

of the public. This does not recognize the contribution aboriginal peoples could make to the Board.

● (1530)

Notice, Mr. Speaker, that company owners and interest owners can get in there but not the aboriginal peoples who only happen to live in the area, at least in the north. The letter continues:

It is particularly insensitive to exclude aboriginal peoples from the board, for hydrocarbon exploration is occurring in their homelands over which they assert aboriginal title. Current administrative arrangements for the Environmental Studies Revolving Fund treat Inuit as the objects of research when instead, we should be involved in determining research needs and priorities, and setting research goals.

The Eskimo or Inuit people are always the object of the research. They are never part of determining research needs and priorities and setting research goals. This can only be done if Inuit are members of the management board.

Can you believe it, Mr. Speaker? How do we explain to the Soviets and Norwegians that our Inuit are just asking to be part of a board which determines studies about their areas and we say, no way? We want it in the Act. I continue quoting:

Consequently we urge that Section 78(3) should be amended to read as follows:

"Members of the Board are to be selected for appointment by the Minister of the Environment from the Public Service of Canada or any coastal province or from among persons nominated by interest owners or the aboriginal peoples of Canada resident in or abutting frontier lands."

Bill C-5 perpetuates a conflict of interest, because the Minister responsible for promoting and regulating northern development is also responsible for research to protect the natural and social environments north of 60. The Environmental Studies Revolving Fund and Management Board should be co-ordinated by the Department of Environment rather than the federal agency most directly involved in regulating industry.

There are conflicts all over the north. I hope that one of the former Ministers of the Environment will rise and speak on this issue. Indian Affairs and Northern Development are sometimes in conflict. It is sometimes an impossible position in which to put a Minister. In this case, it is the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources which is giving out the licenses and, let us face it, it is really concerned with the oil and gas industry. That is its number one producer of energy. That Department is always going to be concerned with that industry.

The simple amendments try to get northerners, easterners and westerners involved in studies. The bureaucrats in Ottawa resist this. They want it to be decided by their people. We say the Department of the Environment—since it has to do with the environment and the other Departments have conflicts—should be involved. In my time in the north I found they want to keep the Department of the Environment out of the north because it is too cozy with DIAND which reluctantly had to share with the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. That is reflected in Clause 76. It is a typical Ottawa bureaucratic saw-off; two funds, two sub-accounts. The Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources have carved it up and are determined not to let the Department of the Environment or any local person be

Canada Petroleum Resources Act

involved in determining studies which affect the locals. I know it is difficult because the Bill is so big, but if the back-benchers could actually read it, I think they would agree with our position on it.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my support to these motions. I think the aboriginal peoples, in fact the peoples abutting all of the frontier lands, should have some input with respect to the activity going on on the frontier in oil and gas.

The Government will say that there is input, there are ways of stating their feelings, how they feel that this matter should be going. However, we had testimony from witnesses when considering what was then Bill C-92, which is now Bill C-5, at committee. We were told by the groups who live in the areas where the activity in oil and gas is taking place that they were not consulted, that they expressed their opinions and gave advice only to have it completely ignored. They said they were not really called upon in an advisory capacity and what was done might have been in the interests of the oil and gas industry, at least in the short term, but it certainly was not in the interests of the people, or the area in which the oil and gas was being examined. This is particularly harmful in the fragile environment of our Canadian north. I think every avenue must be taken to guard the environment and to listen to the people who have lived in these areas for generations. I think the Department of the Environment is the Department which is best able to do that.

To say we do not want another government Department there, that it is only going to muddy the waters, is wrong. We can be told that the Department of the Environment is there in an advisory capacity and in other ways, but that does not satisfy me that the Department is there in the front lines and is inputting as it should. Once an environmental accident occurs, we may never be able to repair the damage, particularly in the Canadian north.

We were dealing with Motion No. 11 which relates to the deletion of Clause 82. I am, as I was before when we were in committee, concerned about what it is really going to do. I am not concerned to the point that I am adamant about deleting the clause but I do feel that if the Government is going to maintain that clause and it is going to remain in the Bill, if the Bill should be passed, then we should have some regulations and further explanations and safeguards as to the administrator of this fund because it is a very important fund. It will be quite significant. I would like to think that the Government is concerned about protecting the interests.

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleagues. I suppose there is nowhere more than in the north that we are aware of the need for industry to coexist with its environment. I do not think there is any question about it and we support that. The Environmental Studies Research Fund is a continuing fund. It has been in existence for some time and has worked very well with the Ministry of the