

Canadian delegations on previous occasions have referred to the ever-increasing pace of exploration activity being undertaken on Canada's continental shelf. One of the most promising areas, and certainly the most forbidding one, is the shelf adjacent to the Canadian Arctic archipelago. The exploitation of Canada's Arctic shelf poses special problems and involves special dangers which the Canadian Government is determined to avoid. This Committee, unfortunately, has not yet been able to give sufficient consideration to the threat of marine pollution, and it is that threat which is of particular concern to my Government in respect of the Canadian Arctic. In this connection, Mr. Chairman, I should like to quote briefly from an address on this subject by Prime Minister Trudeau in the House of Commons on October 24, 1969. On that occasion the Prime Minister said: "Canada regards herself as responsible to all mankind for the peculiar ecological balance that now exists so precariously in the water, ice and land areas of the Arctic archipelago ... We do not doubt for a moment that the rest of the world would find us at fault, and hold us liable, should we fail to ensure adequate protection of that environment from pollution or artificial deterioration. Canada will not permit this to happen. It will not permit this to happen either in the name of freedom of the seas, or in the interests of economic development. We have viewed with dismay the abuse elsewhere of both these laudable principles ... In saying this, we are aware of the difficulties faced in the past by other countries in controlling water pollution and marine destruction within their own jurisdiction."