

Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill

was the first step in this area, and it was a very mild one. It is significant to note that Canada was a party to that agreement, as were the governments of the United Kingdom and Japan. The United States government was not. For the United States government now to come forward and say that we, Canada, ought not to take this action without first trying to solve this problem by way of international meetings and agreements I think is a little far fetched.

In 1962 there were further consultations with respect to the accord which was reached in 1954. At that time, the agreement was amended so that the countries involved could assess penalties against shipowners from participating nations whose ships discharged oil or any other such effluent within 100 miles of the coastal areas. Again, none of the nations involved in the pact were given the right to regulate ships belonging to the signatory nations, so that even though ships belonging to participating nations travelled within the restricted area, other participating nations were not able to take steps which would prevent pollution. Nor was there any provision to cover the accidental discharge of oil or other effluent within these limits. I think it can be easily seen, and I think we all agree, that those measures certainly were not effective enough in combatting those problems which today have become so serious.

Then, again, in November of last year the nations of the world met in Brussels and attempted to hammer out some sort of international agreement to meet this problem; unfortunately, no agreement was reached. So, today, we are introducing this legislation at a time when we are very, very vulnerable. As yet we have no law to protect us from these large super-tankers which are sailing the seas just off our coasts. There will be more of them in future and they will range, as I understand it, between 250,000 and 300,000 tons. If we do not act now but wait until a disaster occurs, I think we shall be derelict in our duty as a nation. We must look after the best interests not only of the people of Canada but of the whole continent.

It is true that by taking the action which is now proposed we may enter into a possible confrontation with our good neighbour to the south and other nations of the world. But I think it must be realized that we are a different nation from the nation to the south. We have different purposes and different interests. The people of Canada must be aware of this and prepare themselves for possible con-

frontations in future involving not only this area but also other areas. These will take place as our country grows and as our neighbour to the south grows and develops. I think, also, that the announcement made yesterday in the United States is very significant. The President of the United States has doubled the amount of money which is ordinarily made available for purposes of naval research. He has doubled the amount of money to be spent on Arctic research. This money is to be used, as I understand it, to develop some sort of skimmer or surface craft, similar to the hovercraft, which is to be used for research in the Arctic. This step was announced only yesterday. We too must move, I submit; we must move now and show no timidity in asserting our rights. Our duty is to protect the people of our country and the people of the continent. Their rights and the rights of all Canadians will be upheld if we support this bill with everything we have.

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I will not take much of the time of the House at this particular stage of the discussion on these important matters. I understand that we will be proceeding to consider Bill C-203 immediately upon the conclusion of this debate. It seems to me that this is where the real crunch of the issue will take place. Since all hon. members who have spoken in this debate thus far have indicated they are in favour of the purposes of Bill C-202, which are, as the title says, to prevent pollution of areas of the Arctic waters adjacent to the mainland and islands of the Canadian Arctic, it would be like opposing motherhood if one were to raise a discordant voice with respect to the purposes of this bill. In these days everybody is fighting the pollution battle. In many respects I think we are tilting at windmills.

As I hear hon. members beating their breasts with patriotic fervour and saying that we must resist any intrusion on Canada's fundamental rights in the Arctic—the Minister of National Defence said just a moment ago that we are reinforcing our military defences in the Arctic to the tune of some 50 personnel—I received an impression similar to that which Don Quixote created when he was tilting at windmills. Nobody disputes the necessity for dealing as quickly as possible with the potential problem of pollution of our Canadian Arctic environment. I use the word "Canadian" intentionally, because it is the Canadian Arctic that we are speaking about. Also, the