

my opinion it is better to take risks by action to protect Canada and Canada's interests than by taking risks of no action.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, it is surprising to me that there have been doubts expressed by this government on the question of Arctic sovereignty. There seems to be conviction on the other side that the government has been consistent in expressing with force and positiveness its claim to Arctic ownership.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) has come as close as any minister in the cabinet to stating in a positive fashion any claim to sovereignty. It is important for the government to speak with one voice. One should expect the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the head of the government, to be forceful and unequivocal about Canada's claim to her Arctic regions. He has not been forceful. He has stated with clarity that the intent of the legislation that we are now discussing is not to assert sovereignty over the north. I am not saying something that is new. My friend and seatmate put it on the record last night. I think in order to put the matter in its proper perspective we should once again refer, particularly the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien) who has a vital concern in this and all northern matters, to the statement of the Prime Minister. It should again be put on the record and judged for what it is.

I say that the Prime Minister has yet to make a positive, strong statement claiming Canada's ownership of her Arctic areas. This is what my friend put on the record last night. When discussing these bills with the press, the Prime Minister said:

This is the first bit of legislation—it is not an assertion of sovereignty,—

Perhaps the member who just resumed his seat might pay attention to the words of the Prime Minister. The hon. member seems to be under the misapprehension that positive statements have been made. At this press conference the Prime Minister said, and I quote:

—it is not an assertion of sovereignty, it is an exercise of our desire to keep the Arctic free of pollution and by defining 100 miles as the zone within which we are determined to act, we are indicating that our assertion there is not one aimed towards sovereignty—

This is the Prime Minister speaking.

—that our assertion there is not one aimed towards sovereignty—

Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Bill

That is for the enlightenment of the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand).

—but aimed towards one of the very important aspects of our action in the Arctic.

To me that means the Prime Minister, by this legislation, is not seeking to assert sovereignty over Canada's Arctic. That is what he said. Why there should be any doubt about the ownership of these lands is beyond me.

I want to deal at some length with the life of one of our more famous French Canadians. In a book entitled, "The True North" by Fairley & Israel, published in 1957, some attempt is made to resurrect the history of this gentleman who has made such a great contribution to the securing for Canada of our Arctic heritage. I quote from page 5:

It is possible that only one Canadian out of a thousand has heard of Captain Bernier. Perhaps only one in ten thousand knows anything of his life. History plays strange tricks, giving fame to one man, denying it to another. Yet Admiral Richard E. Byrd, himself a famous explorer, has called Bernier "the dean of arctic explorers". And in 1926, the *Toronto Star* said, "It has to be admitted that Bernier is our great arctic pioneer and years ago he kept arctic questions before Canadian statesmen and the Canadian when our interest was at a low ebb. He, more than any man, kept Canada from tossing away its arctic inheritance."

This book is the story of how Captain Bernier went about doing just that. The work of Captain Bernier really commenced in earnest after the conclusion of World War I. Prior to the war, he was commissioned by the Canadian government to make annual patrols throughout Canada's Arctic archipelago. It outfitted a ship which he called the *Arctic*. These patrols were made on an annual basis. After the war the nature of the patrols changed because of the increasing interest in geology and other activities in these Arctic areas.

In the summer of 1925, when the matter really came to a head and aroused sufficient interest to be debated with seriousness in this House, a situation arose between Canada and the United States, coincidentally, which could have caused a good deal of unpleasantness between our two countries. As accounted in "The True North", the situation arose in this way:

Two Americans had decided to attempt an airborne trip to the North Pole. One was Donald B. MacMillan, a Canadian-born explorer who had become an American citizen. The other was Richard E. Byrd, later to be internationally known as a conqueror of both Poles, then a young commander in the U.S. Navy. Long before the two men set out on their attempt, the newspapers were filled with accounts of their preparations.