

*Oil and Gas Act*

bill. What I am saying is that the definition giving Canada jurisdiction over its resources to a depth of 200 metres must leave in doubt those areas that are 450 metres in depth.

**Mr. Orange:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question?

**Mr. Aiken:** Is it a question of privilege?

**Mr. Orange:** No. I wish you would permit a question.

**Mr. Aiken:** Yes.

**Mr. Orange:** The hon. member read that portion of the section referring to the 200 metres, and I wonder if it would be useful to read the balance of it.

**Mr. Aiken:** I read the balance.

**Mr. Orange:** It reads:

200 metres or beyond that limit to where the depth of the superjacent water admits to the exploitation of the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil thereof

Are we not talking there about 200 metres or beyond?

**Mr. Aiken:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member generally asks intelligent questions but I do not understand that one. I read the whole section when I started. All right then, what does it mean? It reads: "200 metres or beyond to where the depths of the superjacent water admits of the exploration of the natural resources of the seabed". Is that what we have sovereignty over or is it not? If we have sovereignty over 200 metres or beyond 200 metres to some other undefined depth, what is the other undefined depth? Why are we admitting that there is any location in the Arctic waters over which we do not have sovereignty?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Aiken:** This is what I want to know. What portions of these areas are not Canadian territory? I say it is all Canadian territory, regardless of the depth of the sea. Surely, that is not the point at all. Surely our 12-mile limit or 3-mile limit does not depend on how deep the water is. Surely, our sovereignty does not depend on how deep the water is.

I know this bill was drafted with oil and gas exploitation in mind. I say that with this in mind, there has been a complete oversight of the side effects that the bill would have, one of which would be an admission that there may be part of the Canadian Arctic

waters over which we do not have sovereignty. Regardless of how you cut it, that is the way subclause (b) of this bill reads. That is what I am objecting to. We are cutting away at sovereignty. The government refuses to make the simple statement, "The Canadian Arctic is under Canadian sovereignty". If they will just make that statement, we will be all right but they will not do it. The Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development brought in a strong report. We only debated it one day because the government had no alternative, since they were ruled out of order when they tried to stop it. The motion for concurrence in the report has gone back on the Order Paper and we probably will not see it again.

The purpose of the amendment which Your Honour has ruled out of order—for which I am going to substitute another which will not be ruled out of order—is to delay the passage of this bill until the question of Arctic sovereignty is settled once and for all or the report of the Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development considered and settled. We must not leave this great gap, which leaves us wondering what this bill means. We must settle the main issue, where our sovereignty ends. I do not want to see this House pass a bill which limits our sovereignty, or appears to limit it, until after we have given this Parliament the opportunity of saying, "The Arctic is ours." We have not had that opportunity yet.

I have no criticism of the amendment being ruled out of order, but I am explaining why we would have liked to proceed in this way. We have preferred to follow the course suggested in the amendment but if we cannot, then we are prepared to use the direct method, the six months' hoist. We feel so strongly that we should not deal with this bill and the limitations and the derogations of our sovereignty contained in it until after the main issue is settled, that we are prepared to move the amendment. We think, Mr. Speaker, that logic must force any member in the House to support such an amendment. We are not only putting the cart before the horse, we are putting a very rickety cart before the horse and it may fall apart before we know where we are going.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) that the motion be amended as follows:

That the word "now" be deleted and the words "this day six months hence" be added at the end of the question.