

the environment and the welfare of the Inuit and other inhabitants. It is on those two points, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to make some observations and express some concerns about Bill C-75.

The main route for this oil tanker traffic in the Arctic will be the Northwest Passage. Members will be aware that this is an environmentally sensitive region. In January of 1982 a Green Paper on Lancaster Sound was issued. Members will know that this is an area on the shores of the Northwest Passage inhabited by a community of Inuit. That Green Paper, produced by the Department, said as follows:

There are a number of particularly important or biologically sensitive suites within the Lancaster Sound region, which are unprotected at this time . . . If the shipment of oil through the Northwest Passage takes place, then the potential for oil spills will exist: The environmental consequences of a large spill could be catastrophic.

I want to admit that the Government has shown some modest awareness and concern for this reality. In February of 1985, for example, the then Minister of Supply and Services, who is now the Associate Minister of National Defence (Mr. Andre) issued a press release announcing that \$1.2 million was going to be spent to conduct a hydrographic survey in Arnott Strait. The Minister indicated:

The over-the-ice survey will map a safe shipping lane for possible tanker traffic in an area close to the North Magnetic Pole—the Arnott Strait lies between Cameron Island and Ile Vanier in the high Arctic.

The Minister went on to say:

The Government recognizes the possible danger to the ecology caused by tanker traffic navigation in high Arctic water.

He said:

I'm convinced that this survey will help avert shipping accidents, which lead to costly spillage cleanup and threats to the ecology. As well it will build confidence in the feasibility of moving crude oil southward from northern Arctic regions.

I think members of the Government know that with any means at all at our disposal we cannot prevent an oil spill from taking place. If there is going to be an increased volume of oil tanker traffic through the Northwest Passage, we can be almost certain that at this time, with the technology that we have and without considerably more research and development, there is a very good likelihood of an environmental disaster taking place.

Bill C-75 is telling us that oil tankers will be utilizing the waterways at an accelerated pace. The Bill informs us that the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act is going to take second place to other provisions of the Canada Shipping Act. It says that where a convention ship is involved—and I will explain in a moment what a convention ship is—other parts of the Canada Shipping Act will prevail over the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. In the terms of the Bill itself a convention ship means:

a sea-going ship, wherever registered, carrying, in bulk as cargo, crude oil, fuel oil, heavy diesel oil, lubricating oil, whale oil or any other persistent oil;

I believe that this major decision which has been taken very recently by the Government to use oil tankers in the high Arctic ought to have been much more fully debated than it has been until now. I believe that the most careful and cautious

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concern has to be given to the people for whom this region is home. I am talking, Sir, about the Inuit people of Canada. I wonder how serious the Government really is about opening up Arctic routes to year-round oil tanker shipping and about protecting that sensitive ecology and delicate environment. In September, 1985, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) sent a letter of congratulations to Panarctic Oils on the first commercial shipment of crude oil from Canada's Arctic. She said:

● (1410)

After 17 years in the north, you and your company have proven that it is possible to ship crude oil from above the Arctic Circle with the maximum regard for the environment, and to the protection of the northern ecology.

More than that, however, the Bent Horn shipment by both the M.V. Arctic and the Imperial Bedford has helped to confirm Canada's jurisdiction over the Northwest Passage.

There were some observers of that particular shipment who had other views and concerns. Some were Members of the House and others were journalists who specialize in this area. One of them, Marian Stinson, writing in *The Globe and Mail*, made this comment:

The federal Government has relaxed the regulations for environmental protection for this season to enable Panarctic to get the oil to market in the south.

A Coast Guard icebreaker will accompany the M.V. Arctic to compensate for the fact that the upgrading of the tanker has not been completed to meet the standards required for severe ice conditions—

Because the oil will move through Lancaster Sound, which is biologically one of the richest areas in the Arctic, future large-scale deliveries of hydro-carbons could have serious environmental implications. The economy of the Inuit who live in the area is based on hunting on the ice, and any increase in traffic could affect their livelihood.

We know that the M.V. Arctic made it. We also know that the Government played Russian roulette to some extent in this situation because it issued an Order in Council on July 25 in which it amended certain regulations of the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act to make it possible for that vessel to carry a shipment of oil from Bent Horn to Montreal.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) congratulated Panarctic. However, we must recognize that this vessel did not meet the safety regulations of the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. In congratulating the company, the two Ministers said that this indicates that Canadians are determined to exploit their northern resources. I believe that there is an alarming aspect to this situation. I find it alarming if exploitation will take precedence over environmental concerns. I find it alarming if the legitimate claims of the Inuit people of Canada are being ignored in this policy decision.

The Inuit people, through their organizations, are very much aware of what is taking place. They have been concerned about this since as long as ago as May 3, 1982 when a memorandum was prepared for the Inuit Tapirisat Board of Directors.

In that memorandum they indicated the need for an effective campaign against Dome Petroleum's year round Arctic oil tanker proposals. The memorandum said: