

Oil and Gas Act

caused charts to be issued delineating the Arctic portion of the said territorial sea wherefor the Arctic submarine areas adjacent and superjacent to the coast of Canada, to which the bill applies as mentioned in clause 3 thereof, are not known to and cannot presently be determined by this House, and by reason of the immediate relevancy to the bill and the said statute of the declarations, recommendations and other matter set out and contained in the first report of the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, presented to the House on Tuesday, 19 December 1969, relating to the sovereignty of Canada in the Arctic, will not proceed upon this bill until that day next following the day upon which the question is put for concurrence by this House in the said report, or, if Parliament is not then sitting, then on any day next thereafter that Parliament is sitting.

● (12:40 p.m.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I must say that initially I have some misgivings about the admissibility of the amendment. I prefer to consult with Mr. Speaker on the matter and possibly a ruling could be given after the luncheon adjournment.

Mr. Baldwin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I assume that the dictates of intelligence will impel Your Honour to accept the amendment after consultation. That will be fine.

An hon. Member: What intelligence?

Mr. Baldwin: I was speaking of the dictates of intelligence and not of the intelligence on the government side. That is a lost cause. If Your Honour has not accepted the amendment, then perhaps at one o'clock you might hear arguments from hon. members on this side in support of this reasoned amendment.

Mr. Rod Thomson (Battleford-Kindersley): Mr. Speaker, I support the bill, including the principle that we should claim possession of continental shelf areas off Canada's coasts. I believe this bill has implications with regard to the sovereignty issue and the pollution issue and is relevant to any claim we might have to the economic consequences of oil development in this area. Mention has been made of the constitutional or jurisdictional issue. May I, in this connection, call the attention of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) to a speech the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) made. Actually, I wish to read an excerpt from a letter sent by the minister to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Chrétien). It is signed "Jack Davis". As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries has advocated that we establish an

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

underwater park in Georgia strait, and the letter contains part of his argument in that regard. It reads in part:

The constitutional position is also quite clear. As the nation owns all of the land surface below the low water mark off our shores, the areas in question do not have to be transferred from the provincial government. No negotiation with a provincial authority is necessary nor do we have to compensate private interests and assemble acreages to the same extent that we do on land.

I think everyone knows that the Minister of Fisheries is an authority on this matter. I wish he would decide to establish an underwater park in the waters adjacent to the Northwest Territories and make a similar declaration about those waters and the Arctic Archipelago.

Mr. Anderson: Will the hon. member permit a question? For the sake of those hon. members who have been following the hon. member's speech with great attention and interest, could he please let us know the date of the letter he referred to so that other hon. members who wish to may obtain copies of it?

Mr. Thomson: It is dated February 2, 1970. I am wondering if the minister of fisheries has informed that great white father in Victoria, Premier Bennett, of this particular jurisdictional position. If so, I should be interested in hearing Premier Bennett's answer.

This bill also relates to the question of pollution. The minister of fisheries has suggested that if we protect our fish we protect ourselves. I am prepared to accept that as sound reasoning, although it seems probable that he heard this from his friends the fish. He is saying that what is good for fish is good for Canada. This reminds me of an argument I heard south of the border to the effect that what is good for General Motors is good for the United States. The minister's approach is somewhat newer.

An hon. Member: It sounds like a fishy argument.

Mr. Thomson: The minister of fisheries has suggested that, "It is all right for you to drill for oil off Canada's coast, but don't dare drill for oil in Georgia strait because we want to put an underwater park there." He is seeking the co-operation of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The oil business is important to Canada and passage of this bill will bring some measure of certainty to our oil interests. For instance, those involved with oil matters will now know