

*Oil and Gas Act*

whether he could help clarify this situation. I did so deliberately because I think it is of the utmost importance to this debate that members of Parliament have some definite information as to the state of negotiations between the provinces and Ottawa.

● (12:30 p.m.)

In my question I indicated that there had been correspondence flowing from the Prime Minister's office beginning on November 29, 1968, followed by a further letter on February 27, 1969, in an attempt by the federal government to get the agreement of the provinces to precise delineation of jurisdictional responsibility. This resulted, I suppose, from the transfer of certain lands from northern affairs to the new resources department in 1966. At one time resources came exclusively under the old department of northern affairs but now they are divided between northern affairs and the resources department. The uncertainty, the confusion that seemed to prevail in the government benches, Mr. Speaker, at the outset of the debate today indicated that even within the government itself there is still no decision where the respective areas of responsibility lie. I trust that the minister will make a statement this afternoon which will indicate where the negotiations represented by the correspondence from the Prime Minister's office rest at the moment. I think the government owes it to the members of this House and the opposition to clarify this point before we can make any final decision on where we are heading with reference to Bill S-5.

In addition to the problems of intergovernmental disputation, there are other matters to be decided of course. The case of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and the position that they occupy with reference to Bill S-5 would seem to me to be of the utmost importance to the Maritime provinces. This arises from the fact that, as the parliamentary secretary has indicated, clause 3 of this bill quite precisely and specifically delineates the territorial rights under the legislation. For example, it states that the offshore limits would extend to a water depth of 200 metres which would be approximately 650 feet. This is not an absolute figure, of course, because water levels vary from time to time and the whole situation with reference to the position of St. Pierre and Miquelon and the offshore continental shelf in respect to those two islands would, I presume, be a matter of con-

tinuing discussion between the government of Canada and the government of France at the present time.

The Prime Minister has referred to the Supreme Court decision of 1967 which resulted from the reference made to that body arising from the dispute on the west coast. Again, I think it should be clarified whether the government of Canada regards the Supreme Court decision in favour of the federal government's claim with respect to the west coast situation as applying to other coastal areas of Canada as well. I trust information will be forthcoming along this line.

My greatest concerns with regard to the proposed amendments have to do with the situation in the Northwest Territories, and in particular the Canadian Archipelago, arising from the current discussion on sovereignty. The original Bill S-29 did not precisely delineate the continental shelf and the offshore limitations. Under the amendments, the Canadian Archipelago will be subject to the same terms of reference as the coastline continental shelf. It will be readily seen, Mr. Speaker, that this immediately raises the whole question of Canadian sovereignty in northern Canada. Members of the official opposition feel strongly that before we can proceed further in the discussion and consideration of Bill S-5, the government should in no uncertain manner—which would be quite a change for the government—reaffirm the sector principle of sovereignty in Bill S-29. This has always been regarded as the position of Canada with reference to Arctic sovereignty, until the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) speaking on behalf of Canada began to vacillate on the matter on legalistic and even technical grounds.

I regard clause 3 as representing a very serious threat to Canada's traditional position of sovereignty in the Archipelago, Mr. Speaker. Because of that I should like to move an amendment, seconded by the hon. member for the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) in the following words:

That all the words after the word "that" be left out and the following substituted therefor: this House, by reason that the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act, chapter 22 of the 1964-65 statutes, extends and applies, except as therein provided, to every act of Parliament and every order, rule or regulation thereunder and the Governor in Council has failed to exercise his powers under that statute to issue lists of geographical coordinates of points from which baselines may be determined to establish the inner limits of the Arctic portion of the territorial sea of Canada and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has not