

to the retention of Wrangel island or the continuance of Canada's claim thereto; and the same words apply to the other islands covered by the expedition.

Mr. GRAHAM: The policy of the Government, as I understand it, is as just expressed by the Minister of Finance—what we have we hold.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Well, have we Wrangel island?

Mr. GRAHAM: Yes, as I understand it, and we propose to retain it.

Mr. FIELDING: We had it in December, and we have not let it go.

Mr. SHAW: I think there is probably, as the leader of the Opposition has said, a great deal more to this matter than appears on the surface. I understand that the United States have published a map in which they show all the lands north of Melville island, I think, as being a country which does not belong to anybody, and which is consequently open for discovery by any nation whose expedition may happen to locate there. I think it is a matter of the utmost importance that we should not lose sight of the fact that the extreme northern part of this country should be preserved to Canada. It may not seem of much importance now, but I have no doubt that in the years to come it will be a matter of very great regret if this or any other government fails to take proper measures to ensure that that country belongs to and is secured and maintained by Canada.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I can only say in addition to what has been said by the hon. member for West Calgary, that this question is being discussed in the United States papers now. Within the last month it has been discussed in the New York Times and the Washington Post, and there is no doubt that certain interested parties in the United States intend to make a claim to Wrangel island as United States territory by right of prior discovery.

my view, from the little inquiry 9 p.m. I have made, I am satisfied that that claim is unfounded. There is no right of prior discovery beyond the right of Canada or Great Britain in that respect. However, this matter is going to come to the front in the very near future, and I think it is high time that this Government should take a stand on the matter, and make its stand known to the world.

It will be a matter for international discussion very soon unless we are going to forego our claims and let the United States take over the island. Whether the island is of very much practical importance I do not know, but parties in the United States seem to think it is. In fact, one paper says that from one point of view, the mineral wealth of Wrangel island is far greater than that of Alaska. That may be problematical, but it is the basis of the claim which is made by certain interests in the United States.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The Government has had interviews with Mr. Stefansson. I do not know that it is in the public interest to disclose the full nature of those interviews, but I might say that at the present time the Canadian flag is flying on Wrangel island, and there are Canadians on the island, members of a previous expedition of Stefansson's. Mr. Stefansson is about to take a ship up to Wrangel island with some of his men, and has recently had it fitted out with supplies. The Government certainly maintains the position that Wrangel island is part of the property of this country.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is clear and definite. Of course, the Prime Minister knows that the men that were there were there long before he had been in his present position, and therefore some considerable length of time. I may say as well that there may be claim to this island on behalf of Russia, a claim based very largely on the geographical location of the island. The island of Ellesmere on the west coast of Greenland is also one to which the Government should give some attention. An expedition was about to be launched by a Dane, with, I think, the approval of the Danish government, designed to make some occupational claim in Ellesmere island, and it was anticipated, probably, to base on that occupational claim certain rights of Denmark in the island. I call that matter to the attention of the Government, so that whatever position Canada is in with respect to Ellesmere island will be held, because, in my judgment, Ellesmere island is of greater consequence than Wrangel island.

Mr. BROWN: This is a matter of intense interest to every member of this House. Some subjects are discussed, and those who take part are able to speak in a loud tone. This is a matter of great interest, and yet this whole discussion is