

*Oil and Gas Act*

that are before the House now. It is unfortunate that government action was delayed, or at least that enthusiastic support for mineral and oil exploration in the north was dampened down until such time as our American friends were out in the forefront in the exploration field.

In his introductory remarks, the parliamentary secretary indicated that oil will be discovered. It is quite possible that oil could be discovered tomorrow, or at any moment. With the intensity of exploration now going on in the north this is certainly quite probable, but by the same token, Mr. Speaker, oil could have been discovered much earlier in the Canadian northern territories had the pace of enthusiasm and interest in northern development, which was generated during the early 60's, been continued throughout the latter part of the decade.

To get to the heart of the bill, and I notice that this concern was expressed in the other place when Bill S-5 was before those hon. gentlemen, I would like to inquire of the minister what degree of agreement and co-operation has been reached on the basis of consultation between the federal and provincial authorities? The chief purpose of the amendments before us is to define and delineate the continental shelf adjoining the mainland. In the light of the discussions that have been taking place for a number of years, it seems to me that if this legislation is to have any real significance and practical success in its implementation, a reasonable degree of concurrence should have been achieved by the provincial and federal levels of government. I trust that the minister of resources will make a statement, because no information along these lines was included in the opening remarks of the parliamentary secretary.

I would also like to hear comment from the minister on what degree of consideration this matter has received in the Resource Ministers Council, the administrative innovation established in areas of federal-provincial dispute with particular reference to resource matters. To me that would seem to be the ideal machinery for ironing out the obvious difficulties which have plagued the implementation of government initiative, both at the federal and provincial levels in the important matter of off-shore resource development.

At one time, and I am wondering whether this situation still prevails, Mr. Speaker, in order to be absolutely certain of their position with reference to areas of jurisdictional dispute, the mining and oil companies took out

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

permits from both the provincial and the federal authorities. In view of the substantial amounts of money involved in exploration, they were not going to take the risk of being cut out because of difficulties existing between both levels of government. These were some of the questions that were raised in the other place.

During the course of the committee hearings in the other place on Bill S-5 the matter of jurisdictional responsibility was not clarified, not even in the testimony of the two departmental officials who appeared before the committee, Mr. G. M. McNabb, Assistant Deputy Minister, Energy Development, and Dr. D. G. Crosby, Chief, Resources Administration Division. It was the hon. Senator Connolly who raised the issue as to whether concurrent permits were still necessary for private industry operating in this field, and in reply Dr. Crosby said:

For the most part, Sir, people who have permit coverage from the federal government also have the same coverage from the appropriate provincial government. They have gone to both levels of authority.

So, I presume that the situation still prevails. Then Senator Connolly asked:

You may have to go to the courts in some cases, is that it?

Dr. Crosby: I do not think, Sir, that this will necessarily become the case. We anticipate that agreements will be reached with the provinces and that these will be enshrined in legislation. As such, they will become the law of the land, of course, both provincially and federally.

Senator Connolly: In legislation?

Dr. Crosby: Yes. As an end result of the Prime Minister's offer, it will be necessary to enact legislation, I should point out that I am no legal expert, Sir, and, speaking completely as a layman, I am at your mercy.

Senator Connolly: We are at yours, too.

That re-echoes the sentiments of members on this side of the House. We are completely in the dark with respect to the present status of jurisdictional problems between the federal and provincial levels of government. I trust that the minister of resources will help clarify this matter before we carry our discussions too far today.

The comments made in the committee in the other place suggest that this amending legislation, which follows so quickly on the initial enactment of the bill, will require almost immediate further amendment, because it was indicated that Bill S-5 is merely anticipatory of further legislation to come. Earlier in our proceedings today I inquired of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)