

Oil and Gas Act

believe this experience will serve as a good foundation upon which to suggest regulations which might be attached to legislation of the type we are considering. I endorse this legislation. It is a step in the right direction. I hope we can tighten it up with a good set of sound anti-pollution regulations.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, we compliment the Parliamentary Secretary on his courage and high measure of statesmanship in piloting this measure through the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: In my opinion it could have a serious affect on the Northwest Territories. Both by expression and implication it amounts to a serious diminution of Canadian sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic. This is an issue in respect of which the Territorial Council has shown far greater courage than this lily-livered government in stating an honest position with regard to sovereignty.

There are one or two considerations which persuade me to support the motion of my hon. friend from Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken), but before doing so I wish to enlarge on a point mentioned earlier by some hon. members. We are dealing with an amendment to Bill C-48 which was enacted in June of last year, shortly before the infamous attempt by the government to force down the throat of this House certain rule changes on the ground that the government needed the powers contained in Standing Orders 75b and 75c in order to assure the early passage of legislation which it considered urgent.

We find that this important Bill C-48, enacted last year, has never been operated. Today we are being asked to effect its amendment. How much credibility can one attach to hon. members opposite, when they follow a course of conduct of this kind? This is the sort of treatment to which we are subject in the House by a government which really does not know whether it is coming or going most of the time. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) talked about 74 measures which the government needed passed in 74 days. I hope hon. members will bear this in mind when spokesmen for the government come to us and ask: Why did you not pass this legislation? Let them remember that we enacted Bill C-48 last year, an important bill, and that it was not even acted upon.

I wish to make two points concerning the merits of the amendment. I believe it is completely wrong to bring forward such an

amendment at this time. I am amazed that the government has done so. I think of the phrase "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad." We know the government proposes later to introduce legislation dealing with pollution in Arctic waters and the inland waters of the north. Why, in the name of heaven, was the amendment not kept until that time in order that we might engage in a proper debate on all the important issues involved? These are important issues which we in the opposition have attempted, with the limited weapons at our disposal, to bring before the people of Canada in an effort to get this government to reassert the unequivocal declaration which previous prime ministers and administrators have made.

• (3:20 p.m.)

In view of these facts, for the government to take this provocative action now and to include within its proposals amendments that challenge the entire question of Canadian sovereignty, because this is what they have done; let there be no mistake about it—

Mr. Olson: No.

Mr. Baldwin: The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) can say what he likes, but he knows little about wheat and even less about Arctic sovereignty. On reading this bill there is no doubt that a further challenge is brought forward by the government to the cardinal principle of sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic which by tradition, declaration, assertion, geography and occupation have been, and even without this government's help will continue to be, Canadian waters.

As the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka has said, the original bill introduced last year, Bill V-48, provided in clause 3 that the act was to apply to oil and gas in the Yukon territory and Northwest Territories. That did beg the question; but at that time the government had not stooped, as it has since, to taking this weak-kneed and vacillating position on Arctic sovereignty.

Those of us who were interested in this bill assumed that the words "the Yukon territory and Northwest Territories" meant an area not only of land but of waters which for at least 100 years had been accepted as being within the sovereignty of the Canadian people. We now find that by amendment to the interpretation section, section 2, the definition of the word "pipeline", for example, has been extended to cover offshore installations or