

Farm Improvement Loans

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crouse: I also note this statement by the minister:

During the conference an impasse developed between the United States and certain other members of ICNAF concerning the depleted fish stocks in convention waters off the New England coast.

Obviously this is understandable, for sophisticated fishing fleets from other nations are taking bigger and bigger catches. It is obvious that the 12-mile limit is not working in Canada. It is obvious that it is not working along the New England coast.

● (1420)

The minister said that we have by no means solved all of our difficulties in the North Atlantic. This has to be the understatement of the day. The main question is how some 132 nations will respond to proposals for the proper use of the world's oceans and control of the continental shelf. This is certainly the most important and the most underrated issue of our times. At stake in this matter are fishing and mineral rights and pollution and navigational control, all of which, in our view, should be vested in the coastal state. This is a responsibility that we must have.

I submit that our position on this matter when we appear before the next Law of the Sea Conference should be made abundantly clear. There should be no doubt left that we claim the right to mineral and fishing exploration on our continental shelf and slope, whether this extends 200 miles or goes beyond that limit. It should be our responsibility to manage these resources wherever and whenever they may be found on our continental shelf and slope.

Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, first I should like to say we appreciate the fact that the minister provided us with a copy of his statement somewhat in advance of the opening of the House. I suppose I should also say that we are pleased to accept gratefully such crumbs of information as the minister has given us in his statement on motions. This in itself is a rather rare event in the House. I have never quite been able to decide whether it is because the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) keeps a tight thumb down on the minister or whether the reason is the minister's own natural shyness about making statements in the House, so seldom do we hear any announcement from him.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think I must interrupt the hon. member to remind him that according to the terms of the Standing Order his comments should refer to the statement made by the minister. I also take this opportunity of reminding hon. members that the Standing Order does have the requirement that comments made by members in opposition should be brief.

Mr. Barnett: I must apologize, Mr. Speaker, if I have transgressed the rules of the House. There is really so little to say about the statement itself that I felt I could not avoid at least drawing this rare event to the attention of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Nevertheless, I am glad the minister has made this statement to the House, and I hope that we will hear important announcements of policy from him in this way on future occasions.

The minister has indicated that we have achieved a somewhat larger quota under ICNAF in the North Atlantic. If I read correctly the figures the minister tabled, he is talking in terms of tons. In his statement he makes a great show of the fact that we will have an extra 100 million pounds over what we have at the present time. My arithmetic translates this into 50,000 tons, which is the equivalent of a quota for what was considered a relatively minor herring fishery on the Pacific coast last year. So I do not feel that we should go overboard in agreeing that this represents any great breakthrough as far as Canada is concerned.

Like the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse), I think our eyes should be on what this may mean in respect of the Law of the Sea Conference. If it means anything it means that Canada, in international councils, should be pressing much more vigorously than in the past for recognition of our jurisdiction over the resources of the continental shelf. In this connection, I again stress this point for the ear of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp). In so far as the meeting reported upon by the minister does represent some progress in the recognition of the management of the resources of the North Atlantic fishery, to that extent we are glad to have this report from the minister. I hope we will have further statements from him from time to time which will perhaps reveal more significant developments than this statement does.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, we must of course be glad for the gains made at the annual meeting mentioned in the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker, I would, nevertheless, like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of Canada's being very firm at these meetings so as to prevent excessive exploitation of our territorial waters by foreigners. In my opinion, there should be increased surveillance since we know quite well that many foreign fishing vessels enter Canadian waters, even the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for example.

We should be glad for the gains of which the minister has spoken, but on the other hand we must continue to stand firm at these meetings, to safeguard Canada's full authority in its territorial waters. Though Providence has granted us an abundance of fish, that does not mean that we should swallow the bait too.

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[*English*]

FINANCE

ALLOCATION OF CREDIT BY CHARTERED BANKS TO FARMERS—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 43 I rise on a matter of urgency, particularly in my riding of Prince George-Peace River. It concerns the refusal of the chartered banks to make loans to farmers under the terms of the Farm Improvement Loans Act despite the assurances of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) to the House on June 5 and again on June 15 that preference in allocation of