

*Adjournment Debate*

quite emphatically that unilateral action would not be taken by his government to protect our fishing industry and our fishermen against the plundering of foreign nationals.

The conservation and management of our rapidly dwindling fish stock is a matter of grave concern to our fishermen. It should not have become the subject of such blatant political dishonesty on the part of this government and in particular the two responsible ministers.

Our fishermen have been used as pawns and the butt of political chicanery almost since the industry began. They have been victimized, exploited, and almost dehumanized for centuries by unscrupulous fish merchants, and have been used in every way possible by likewise unscrupulous politicians. Is it any wonder they have lost confidence in the industry and view with suspicion the actions of their political leaders?

If the government is unwilling to honour the commitment that was made by two of its members during the election campaign, the very least we should expect is that the Prime Minister or the Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc) tell the fishermen of this country precisely what their intentions are with regard to the management and control of our marine resources.

The minister or his parliamentary secretary will no doubt tell us this evening that they are placing all their bets on the outcome of the next Law of the Sea Conference. The minister's predecessor, Mr. Davis, told us the same thing five years ago.

We want to know, and even more important our fishermen want to know, what action the government will take if we have no more success at the next Law of the Sea Conference than we had at the one held in Caracas earlier this year. Is the government prepared to abandon its powder puff, nice guy approach and tell the other nations of the world that, with or without their concurrence, we intend to take control of our continental shelf and the resources that lie thereon, or is it going to sacrifice the fishing industry and our fishermen for the sake of diplomatic niceties and being thought of as nice guys?

**Mr. Herb Breau (Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that what he said in closing is not correct. We will not let the fishing industry down.

The question has been raised whether Canada should now proceed unilaterally and extend its fishing jurisdiction to the edge of the continental shelf. As the House is aware, Mr. Speaker, the world community is presently engaged in bringing the Law of the Sea in line with the political and economic realities of our times.

A first session of the Law of the Sea Conference was held last summer in Caracas. Given the large number of participating countries, over 135, and the many complex issues to be resolved, it was not possible to elaborate, in all its details, a treaty dealing with all the aspects of the subject.

However, during the Caracas session real progress was achieved. It became apparent that a future Law of the Sea Treaty could only be agreed upon if coastal states were recognized as having effective rights with respect to both

living and mineral resources, as well as for the protection of the marine environment. These rights will be exercised by the individual coastal state in an "economic zone", which is generally conceived as extending to 200 miles from the coast. However, the question of whether such rights would go beyond the 200-mile limit and reach the edge of the shelf did not receive the same degree of support as was given the economic zone concept. Canada is, however, hopeful that some arrangement can be worked out in this sense.

In these circumstances would it be timely for Canada to extend its fishing jurisdiction unilaterally? I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that, as a responsible member of the international community, Canada should aim at a widely accepted Law of the Sea and, as a consequence, should give the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference a chance to succeed. We are confident that it will. This does not mean that the government is not conscious of the need to prevent over-exploitation of the living resources off our coasts, even before the conference ends. Indeed, through action as a member of international bodies such as ICNAF, as well as through bilateral consultations, the government is constantly trying to control this situation.

The best way for Canada to acquire sufficient powers to remedy this problem is through international agreement. In present circumstances unilateral action would only create confusion and controversy. I would also add that control of the living resources over the continental margin would fall short of providing adequate protection for salmon. That particular issue also calls for international acquiescence in the rights of the state of origin.

In brief, Mr. Speaker, unilateral action, though not called for at the moment, could very well be considered as a matter of policy if the Law of the Sea Conference fails, within a reasonable period of time, to reach a satisfactory solution as regards the interests of coastal states in their offshore living resources. This coincides with the view taken by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in this House on October 3, as well as with the statements made by other ministers before that.

STORMS—ATLANTIC PROVINCES—REQUEST FOR AID FROM  
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

**Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, it is well known that I participate frequently in what is called the "Late Night Show". Some people ask why, and the answer is that I am a great lover of crowds and there is nothing like a large and enthusiastic audience to turn me on.

A few days ago I asked a question about the measures being taken to assist the people of Prince Edward Island who suffered severe crop damage, besides loss of electricity and telephone services, as a result of a severe storm in what is well known as the garden province. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen) seemed to be well briefed on the issues and I congratulate him on the lucidity, fulsomeness and directness of his reply. He might well serve as a model to other parliamentary secretaries, and indeed to those lofty incumbents of the treasury benches.