

Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act

An hon. Member: Why respect that sovereignty?

Mr. McGrath: Obviously, we must respect the sovereignty of France over these French islands. But why should we respect the right of fishermen of that country, in the light of the knowledge we have, to fish where they do? Why should we extend to fishermen of that country the right to fish within the three-mile limit while we, in fact, do not permit our own nationals to do so.

Mr. Bell: It is amazing.

Mr. McGrath: This legislation makes a mockery of justice. It is sheer window dressing. All it will do is impose a handicap on our Canadian fishermen and give to the fishermen of France an extreme advantage.

An hon. Member: Why will you vote for the bill, then?

Mr. McGrath: I intend to vote on it because it represents half a loaf, and half a loaf is better than no loaf.

Mr. Thompson: There, you have your answer.

Mr. McGrath: There is another aspect of the legislation to which I want to refer. I find it difficult to understand why your rights on the continental shelf, which were spelled out by the 1958 Geneva convention, are not incorporated in this bill. When the Secretary of State was out of the House the Minister of Fisheries remarked on this point and strongly suggested or implied—I do not want to put words in his mouth—that that provision ought to have been included within the ambit of the legislation. These rights are acknowledged by the Geneva agreement and are for the purposes of exploring and exploiting the natural resources of the continental shelf. I repeat, why cannot they be incorporated in this bill? It is just as important for us to spell out in a piece of legislation our rights to the continental shelf as it is for us to spell out, in a half hearted and practically meaningless way, our rights to extend our territorial seas from three miles to 12 miles offshore.

I think we ought to finally define what traditional rights of the countries we are talking about are. I am sick and tired of hearing about the traditional fishing rights of those countries; they compete with Canada in the markets of the world for fisheries products. I wish the government would define what those traditional rights are. Why does someone not

[Mr. McGrath.]

sit down with the governments of Portugal, France and Spain and say, "Let's talk about these traditional rights because we have pollution laws to enforce and conservation laws to enforce. We must protect our own nationals and our own fishing industry." Last and by no means least, I say that if this legislation is to mean anything, the treaty made by Great Britain in 1713 and amended in 1904 ought to be renegotiated or, in my view, repealed.

Mr. Paul St. Pierre (Coast Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, I understand there is a disposition in the House to wind up this debate fairly early. I will be very brief in my intervention. I rise, of course, to support the legislation. It has been very heartening for me to see, both in this debate and in the debate on the previous bill dealing with Arctic pollution, the interest that has been generated in southern Canada in the great north country. True, we have seen that interest rising and falling throughout the history of Britain and of our own country. Perhaps this time the interest aroused will remain.

I will not urge the ripping up of treaties, as the previous speaker did. I certainly welcome the support Conservative party members have expressed for this bill, qualified though their support is. I find their reasons for supporting the bill a trifle confusing. The first two or three spokesmen for that party berated the government for taking unilateral action and establishing an Arctic pollution control zone in the absence of international law in this field. The hon. member who just spoke wanted to rip up a treaty that we have had with France since 1713 and renewed in this century.

Mr. McGrath: It was not renewed by us.

Mr. St. Pierre: Well, if the hon. member suggests that Canada should rip up every treaty which preceded our assertion of full sovereignty following the first world war, I am afraid he will have difficulty in explaining his actions to other nations of the world.

I want to deal very briefly with only one aspect of this legislation. In the debate on the bill preceding this one, and of course the provisions of Bills C-202 and C-203 are interrelated and inextricably linked together, several members of the opposition parties said that increasing our territorial sea limit from three to 12 miles means in some way that we are abandoning our claims in the Arctic to larger expanses of water. This, as I said previously, I