

*Private Members' Business*

Canada has taken the first step. Not only that, but Canada was extremely active in promoting the text of this convention. It had a full-time ambassador involved in it and received a lot of political support in the years that led to its conception and finalization. Today, as we speak in this House, 53 nations have ratified the Law of the Sea treaty. Canada, unfortunately, is not among them. With the exception of Iceland, all the countries that have ratified it are from the developing world. They include Mexico, Brazil and India.

In order to become effective, the Law of the Sea Convention requires 60 nations for ratification. That means that we are short seven nations to make this convention operative and to trigger it into effect. Once the 60 nations have ratified it, then the provisions of the convention come into force.

The reluctance of industrialized nations to ratify the accord revolves apparently around concerns on section 11 which deals with the mining of the sea bed. Yet, it is increasingly evident that the commercial prospects for viable sea bed mining are way down the road, maybe 20 years or more, if it is viable at all.

What is happening is this. Canada has benefited directly and indirectly in many ways from the provision of this Law of the Sea without however carrying its burden and doing its share. For instance, Canada has now in place a 12-mile territorial zone around our coast. That, is a big plus.

Second, the 200-mile limit, called the exclusive economic zone, gives Canada the right to declare sovereignty over 1.3 million square nautical miles off of Canada's coast. This also gives Canada control over fishing and oil and mineral exploration in such areas.

Third, Canada has the right, as a result of this convention, to regulate fisheries in the exclusive economic zone by determining the total catch allowed and its optimal use.

Fourth, there is article 66 of the Law of the Sea Convention which has the effect of protecting Canada's salmon stocks. This article gives those states which ratify the convention the primary responsibility on river fishing stocks which originate in the signatory and ratifying country.

Fifth, in the Law of the Sea Convention there are articles 63 and 64 which are very important because they

address the issue of management and conservation of straddling stocks and migratory species. All of us in this House have heard a lot in recent months about straddling stocks in connection with the northern cod. We heard about their importance and the importance of protecting it. That matter is recognized and is embedded in the Law of the Sea Convention.

• (1710)

Sixth, the convention gives Canada enhanced jurisdiction for the prevention of marine pollution and also special provisions for Arctic waters.

Seventh, the Law of the Sea Convention maintains Canada's right to complete sovereignty over the Northwest Passage, a matter of enormous importance to the pride of Canadians, a matter that has been debated in this House, particularly in the 1970s at the time of the *Manhattan*. I am sure you will agree, Madam Speaker, that matter is very close to the heart of our nation.

Finally the convention represents a precedent-setting international convention which seeks to protect our environment and which promotes sustainable development of fisheries, of fishery stocks, and of other marine resources.

What more could we ask from a convention? It seems to have been written by a Canadian for Canadians of this generation and generations to come.

By ratifying the Law of the Sea, Canada would strengthen the sustainable development of the high seas and straddling stock fisheries, as is clearly pointed out in the Brundtland report, *Our Common Future*. In that connection I just want to quote briefly what *Our Common Future* says at page 273:

The United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea is the most ambitious attempt ever to provide an internationally agreed regime for the management of the oceans. The resulting convention represents a major step toward an integrated management regime for the oceans. It has already encouraged national and international action to manage the oceans.

The convention reconciled widely divergent interests of states and establishes the basis for a new equity in the use of the oceans and their resources.

And so on and so forth. Time precludes me from quoting any further but we can see the thrust of how the Brundtland commission, the global commission on environment and development, assesses the importance of the Law of the Sea, and this was five years ago.