

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

matter might be considered. In due course the committee might want to look into the matter, to study the whole question and to hear evidence, but I would hesitate to have the grievance raised by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands referred to a committee by way of a question of privilege.

In the circumstances I hope the hon. member will find some other way to have the matter considered by the House or by the committee in due course.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE****NATIONAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC WORKS**

First report of Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works—Mr. Hopkins.

**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

First report of Standing Committee on Regional Development—Mr. Morison.

[*Editor's Note: For text of above reports see today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY****STATEMENT BY U.S. GOVERNMENT ON LAW OF THE SEA—CANADIAN POSITION**

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Has-tings):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Would he advise the House what is the position which the government intends to take or has decided to take regarding the statement by the United States government yesterday on the law of the sea when it announced that if other countries adopt the same position it would accept the 12-mile limit, with certain reservations regarding fishing rights beyond that limit?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** The Canadian government recognizes the need to reach solutions on these questions and thus we agree to the principle of the 12-mile limit for the territorial sea. With respect to the proposals relating to freedom of passage in international straits, and the exploitation of fisheries resources beyond 12 miles, these proposals raise questions of principle for Canada which

[Mr. Speaker.]

are under discussion with other countries, including the United States. As these discussions are continuing, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to make any further comment.

**Mr. Hees:** A supplementary question. In view of the fact that other important maritime nations are now stating their positions with regard to the law of the sea, and in view of the difference between the minister's statement in reply to a question put by myself in this House last Thursday regarding northern sovereignty and the statement made in answer to a question at Carleton University by the Prime Minister a few nights ago on this same subject, does the minister not consider it is high time the government should make a clearcut statement that all other maritime nations can understand regarding our position?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It seems to me the hon. member is repeating substantially the first question. That is hardly a supplementary.

**Mr. Hees:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am asking the minister if he does not consider that Canada should make a clear-cut declaration that people can understand, because the people of Canada and of other countries round the world do not know where the government stands on this important matter.

**FISHERIES****CANADA-U.S. DRAFT AGREEMENT ON FISHING PRIVILEGES**

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question supplementary to that just asked by the new leader of the opposition.

**An hon. Member:** The old leader of the opposition.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** What progress is being made on ratification or otherwise of the draft agreement with respect to reciprocity in regard to fishing rights?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the draft agreement has not yet come before cabinet.

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****PROPOSED U.S. NUCLEAR TESTS**

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs a question