

*Supply*

Had the government had the intestinal fortitude to do it in 1990-91, and going right back to 1980 when the figures showed that we were fishing too much, then we would not be in the serious situation we are in today.

The figures in the Harris report for the 2J3KL catch show that for every year since 1980, the European Community exceeded the quota allotted to it by us except in one year. That was in 1983.

As far as the Canadians are concerned, in those same years, 1980 to 1989, the last date in this report, the Canadians caught less than their quota, but not because our fishermen did not try. Not only did they try, they tried harder. They had better equipment for locating the cod. They had better equipment for making sure they caught every cod that was available. In spite of that, they caught less than the quota allotted to them because the biomass, the number of cod in the water, was decreasing. Population was declining. We knew that was going on. Professor Harris knew it and he did not keep it quiet. He did not keep it a secret, and yet we did little about it because it would mean hardship today. It will mean disaster tomorrow, the way we are going.

The president of Nat Sea in Newfoundland, a year and a half ago, made a presentation. I do not want to put words in his mouth, but as near as I can recall he said: "In five years we could be looking for the last cod fish off the shores of Newfoundland". He knew it was serious. The fishermen talking to me knew it was serious. More recently, I visited the south shore and saw four boats come in that had been out six hours. None of them had a marketable cod on board.

We have known how bad it is. The Liberals had some idea of it but they did not have as much information as we have had in the past few years. The Conservatives have known and they have not done anything because it would mean hardship today.

That was pretty short-term politics and did nothing at all to save the industry. The situation is serious. There is little question about that. This has to be done. There is no question about that as well. The fisheries council had a report done and there are ways to accomplish this, in spite of the minister's concern. In the 1970s Iceland took unilateral action. It mobilized world opinion on its side before and while it was doing it. World opinion did accept the idea that this was necessary for conservation and proper harvesting. Iceland had to have control of the fish in the waters off Iceland even beyond the 200-mile

limit. In the mid-1970s Iceland took action and got world support. There is nobody fishing there now except Icelanders.

According to a study prepared for the Fisheries Council of Canada on the problem of foreign overfishing, a declaration of unilateral jurisdiction should be seen as: "a positive step in the further development of international law. Not breaking law, making new law. International law is created by states. Only the acts of states can transform something which is a mere proposal into a binding legal rule".

It was indicated in the study that for Canada to generate international support it would be necessary for us to make it clear that the purpose of such unilateral action would not be for Canada to claim a sole right to harvest straddling stocks on the high seas, rather the purpose of such action is to preserve Canada's interests and the interests of the international community in the conservation of these stocks.

The evidence is there. Stocks are declining. We could be looking for that last cod in a relatively short time. We have developed equipment such as the deep sea trawlers, so good at finding the cod, so good at destroying their spawning beds and destroying this resource, that what should be a renewing and renewable resource could well be facing extinction. We have done this. Foreigners share the blame and the seals share the blame. We have to accept our share of the blame as well, and we have to take action, following Iceland's lead if necessary, although I hope it will not be necessary.

Nevertheless we must make it clear to the world that this is what we are going to do. In the interests of Canada and in the interest of saving what is an international resource, this is the action that must be taken. It is not an action we are imposing on any nation or group of nations. We are prepared to live within the recommendations of the same scientists who have been setting the quotas for the European Community, quotas it has been ignoring, such as overfishing, and quotas that we have been ignoring when we set quotas for ourselves that are higher than what the scientists recommend.

We are not blameless. None of us are. Let us take our share of the blame, admit it to the world and let us get on with doing something about it, regardless of who did it or did not do it. Let us get on with proving to the world that we are prepared to take the actions necessary to preserve this resource.