

*Private Members' Business*

control over our straddling stocks and control foreign fishing on a greater area of Canada's coastline.

We are missing other benefits of the Law of the Sea that we should be enjoying. We are particularly missing the opportunity for Canada to be an important partner in protecting our ocean resources and everything they mean to our health and survival.

The prevention of marine pollution is a crucial issue. It is one that has not been dealt with yet. The disposal of radioactive waste at sea is one that has not been dealt with nor has the transportation of hazardous goods on our oceans.

All those are important reasons that Canada should sign this convention and should urge the additional six nations that are needed to do so to make sure that this convention comes into force and effect.

It would allow us to go further in the sustainable development of fishing stocks. I do not need to tell anybody in this House about the perilous condition of our northern cod and the terrible impact this first environmental crisis that this nation has had to deal with is having on hundreds of thousands of people's lives and what it is doing to poverty and unemployment among our fellow Canadians.

We need to be concerned about protecting other marine resources. We need to be concerned about ecologically sound fishing practices if we truly want to preserve the resources of the world, not only for this fishing season or the next fishing season, but also for the next generation and the generations to come.

At the preparatory conferences for the earth summit back in April, Canada with 40 other countries put forward wonderful words on the importance of preserving the oceans of the world. I have to ask myself why are we not ratifying a convention that was approved nearly a decade ago. Is it that we are better at rhetoric than we are at action? Certainly that is part of it.

We know that sustainable development means integrating our decisions about the economy, the environment and humanity. We often forget the third one but it is also part of the concept of sustainable development.

However, the main reason for not ratifying this seems to be economic sea mining interests that may or may not materialize 20 years from now. Meanwhile, we continue withholding our consent to a convention that is vital not only to us, but also to all nations of the world.

I look at the NAFTA and we have had more than one minister in the House talk about the protection that the NAFTA provides. The NAFTA provides environmental protection in areas where conventions have been ratified internationally and are in effect and therefore are binding on Mexico, Canada and the United States.

Here is one convention that could be covered under the NAFTA to protect the seas of the world and we are still refusing to sign it. The fact that conventions are covered in the NAFTA does not mean anything until we have ratified conventions.

Looking at the economic statement from yesterday, I note that we have cut grants and subsidies to environmental technology firms which receive grants for the development and demonstration of commercially viable environmental technologies. That does not make any sense when we have just had a report from the steering committee on prosperity that tells us our environmental technology is one of the major growth opportunities for Canada in the world.

We seem to have contradictory things here. We have statements in the House. We have statements on international platforms. We have statements in Brazil. However, we do not have the ratification of a convention.

The Minister of the Environment has indicated his intention to ratify by Order in Council before the end of this year the Rio conventions on biodiversity and climate change.

I ask him to give the world a good New Year's present and add the Law of the Sea convention to that parcel of conventions which are to be ratified.

• (1720)

**Mr. Fernand Jourdenais (La Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to outline for members of this House some of the other steps this government has taken to promote sustainable development of the ocean resources, including our activities within the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, or to use its acronym, NAFO.