

*Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act*

effect extend the fishing zones of Canada to the outer limit of the continental margins adjacent to our coasts.

I feel that the proposed amendment is incompatible with the bill under consideration. The bill is enabling only, that is, it does not draw fisheries closing lines, but enables the government to do so.

The amendment, however, purports to create fishing zones. I must point out that the bill is so drafted that it would allow the government to create the kind of fishing zones suggested by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett).

The bill is flexible in this respect and of course it was intended to be flexible so that the government could respond to changing situations as and when it might become appropriate.

However, the Secretary of State for External Affairs stated in the House on April 17, that the new fishing zones would be established only where Canada's primary interests relate to fisheries and in areas where Canada has historic claims. He indicated also that the fisheries provisions of this bill will allow the government to determine exclusive fishing zones in those coastal areas where straight baselines have not so far been drawn from headland to headland, namely the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Bay of Fundy, Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, and Queen Charlotte Sound.

There are geographic, legal and political reasons for this position at the present time. The government has emphasized that the bill as it stands is in advance of existing international law but is justified not only by the need to establish a rational system for the management and conservation of coastal fisheries resources but also by the fact that Canada has historic claims to the areas concerned.

A different set of considerations, however, arises in connection with the proposal to establish Canadian fishing zones out to the edge of the continental margins. Such action would obviously have an important impact on the interests and activities of other countries, which in turn could have an effect on Canadian interests. It would add unnecessarily to the already existing differences of views with other states concerning Canadian fishing zones.

Canada has already held negotiations with those countries which have traditional fishing

[Mr. Goyer.]

practices in the existing Canadian fishing zones. The government intends to conclude these negotiations in the near future, both with respect to the existing fishing zones and the areas that will be enclosed within fisheries closing lines. It is desirable in the interests of good relations—not only in terms of good relations but in terms of Canada's own interests in continuing to trade with the countries concerned—to negotiate in this way.

The situation has changed very significantly since we began these negotiations in 1964. The 12-mile contiguous fishing zone which was controversial then is well established now, as is also the 12-mile limit for the territorial sea.

While the government's new proposals for fisheries closing lines give rise to differences of views, the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett) is controversial and could prejudice the Canadian position. We have come a long way with our negotiations and we believe that the end is in sight on the basis of the bill under consideration.

The amendment proposed by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni would prejudice the prospects for early and successful conclusion of these negotiations. It would do this because it would completely change the rules of the game in mid-play, because it would vastly extend the areas involved in the negotiations, and because far greater interests would be at issue on the part of the other countries concerned. From this point of view alone I do not believe that the proposed amendment is constructive or helpful or, indeed, justified in law.

Mr. Speaker, the government is deeply concerned about the need for conservation and protection of Canada's coastal fisheries. We have already taken an important step towards the achievement of these objectives. We agree, however, that more remains to be done with respect to the area beyond Canada's existing fishing zones and the areas to be enclosed within fisheries closing lines. We believe that in the next stage in the protection of coastal fisheries the special rights and responsibilities of the coastal state with respect to the fishery resources of the continental shelf will have to take a primary place. With respect to that area, however, the present situation obviously calls for multilateral action and an increased effort towards internationally agreed solutions.

I would remind hon. members that for more than two years the government has been