

Supply—Fisheries

negotiations are now proceeding on a continuing and urgent basis. As the minister and members of the house who have taken an interest in these matters well know, these negotiations have been going for a long period of time. The Secretary of State for External Affairs, who enters into the picture on these matters, tried to assure us that so far as his department is concerned negotiations on these matters are always proceeding on a continuing and urgent basis. I will not seek to provoke a major debate with the Minister of Fisheries on this point but I would like to suggest that the sequence of events since this house dealt with what is commonly referred to as "the 12-mile limit bill" has certainly confirmed in my mind that the position I and some of my colleagues took at that time was correct and that if we were going to take action we should have gone the whole way, set out the territorial limits and then proceeded to negotiation from a position of strength. As I said, I will not seek to launch into a major debate with the minister on this point, but I simply want to let him know that as far as I am concerned none of the actions he or his colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, have taken in the intervening time have done anything to convince me that I and those who share my point of view were incorrect when we first debated the matter in the house.

There is one other point I would like to touch upon at this time, partly because recently I had in my hands a copy of the report on the Atlantic coast seal fishery by the New Brunswick humane society. I should like to ask the minister to give us his assessment of the story told in that report. As he is probably aware, not only the people of New Brunswick or the people on the Atlantic coast but all Canadians from coast to coast, partly owing to such communication media as television, are interested and very concerned about what is or is not being done in this matter. When the minister is answering this question he might also report on just where we stand regarding an international agreement in this regard under the North Atlantic Fisheries Commission. If my understanding is correct, discussions by this body have recently taken place on this subject.

These are the questions which I want to raise at this time. I feel that the minister did not come to grips with them in his opening statement and, as I said, it is immaterial to me whether they are dealt with now while we are on the first item or whether the

minister prefers to deal with them when we consider the detailed items. Judging by the remarks made by the hon. member for Queens, it seems to me it might be possible for us to conclude the discussion of these estimates while we are still technically on this item and then proceed to accept the detailed items pro forma at the end of the discussion.

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Chairman, a matter was raised by the hon. member which may be of some urgency and I would therefore like to take a minute to give him a brief explanation. I am sure the hon. member will be pleased to know that I will be on the west coast tomorrow to attend a "salute to the salmon day" program on Adams River. On Monday morning I will be in Victoria where I will be meeting with the two ministers concerned, Mr. Williston and Mr. Keirnan, on the problem of the Stellako River drive and the logging in different spawning rivers. I am convinced in advance that following discussions with the ministers concerned we will be able to come to some mutual agreement to protect the fisheries' interest.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, for the reasons outlined by the hon. member for Queens it is not my intention to take much time on this subject. We feel that the procedure followed of referring the estimates to the standing committee, where they received extensive and detailed scrutiny, should meet the need, generally speaking, so far as the consideration of these estimates is concerned. Another reason my remarks will be very brief is the fact it was felt that in the standing committee hon. members would have an adequate opportunity to raise questions and discuss the various matters relative to the fisheries problems and that when the estimates did come back to the house perhaps those who were not privileged to be on the committee would have the opportunity of voicing their views and raising the questions they had in mind. Therefore, as I said, the remarks I will make will be very limited.

Perhaps we should confine ourselves to general observations but I am going to deal with two or three specific matters which I feel are of vital concern. First of all, there is the question of the establishment of the 12-mile limit. This subject was mentioned by the previous speaker. I fully recognize the fact that it involves many problems and that the deliberations may take a considerable length of time. I know that the effects of a decision