

Private Members' Business

will provide access to ports and any surplus allocations and permit commercial arrangements.

If problems arise from the agreement there will be consultations to seek to resolve them. Either Canada or the EC can terminate the agreement on 60 days notice.

Now we have a forum. In June 1992 the UN Conference on Environment and Development called for a high seas fisheries conference. In late 1992 the UN General Assembly created the conference. Canada is no longer alone. We have more than 50 states with us to deliver a powerful ecological message against high seas overfishing.

It has been a long and bitter road in our struggle against foreign overfishing. We have travelled a considerable distance toward our goal. While that goal still seems far off we are on the right road and we are in good company. The meeting of like-minded states in St. John's brought us another step closer to what we must achieve, which is sustainable development in high seas fisheries. I look for the day when we will lift that moratorium so that people on the east coast, particularly in Newfoundland, can go back to the sea and fish for that northern cod.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the hon. member for Fraser Valley East was reading the same motion as I am. I do not see that the motion calls for unilateral action on the part of Canada.

I did not have an opportunity to discuss this with the mover of the motion, the member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, but the motion reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take immediate action to extend custodial jurisdiction for northern cod over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

The action may or may not include actually moving in there and doing it. I am not clear in my own mind and I wish I had thought to ask ahead of time.

In any case it is great to get the reassurances. This is not a new problem. It has existed for a decade and a half at least. We have had Liberal governments and we have had Conservative governments and both have given assurances that the problem is being worked on and that progress is being made.

While progress is being made, as the mover of the motion said it is fairly easy to get people to refrain from

fishing when there are no fish there. We are perilously close to that situation even off the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

For the last four years I have been here each year has brought us closer to the point we are now at with respect to the north Atlantic cod. We now have a moratorium on fishing limits, a two-year holiday. We are giving the cod a holiday for two years. It takes cod six years to mature and breed, so what is two years going to do?

I have no confidence that the cod stocks are going to miraculously reappear in two years time. I wish that could be the case. We all wish it. However it is wishing and not doing anything concrete that has us in the difficulty we are in right now.

I can recall when the current minister of fisheries, at that time the minister of trade, said that he would not allow the cod quota to be reduced to 190,000 tonnes because it would be tough on Newfoundlanders and would create unemployment. The experts were saying it should be 190,000 tonnes or perhaps even less than that but the current minister of fisheries insisted that the quota stay at 260,000 tonnes.

That was the beginning of the trouble. I said at the time that it was short-term gain for long-term pain. I was much more prophetic than I realized at the time.

The member for Fraser Valley East spoke about the great progress that is being made and about the co-operation of the European Community. I can recall travelling to Europe with members of the committee in 1989 when representatives of the European Community told us that as long as we were harvesting the stocks the way we were and as long as we were not obeying the recommendations of our experts to cut the quotas seriously they were not going to pay any attention to the quotas either.

Now we are certainly paying attention. We have stopped fishing and that should have been done earlier than it was. We have demonstrated that we are prepared to take this measure in Canada when it is shown that there is no other alternative. We are doing it. We are proving to the world that we are doing it.

NAFO is agreeing. It has always gone along with us. It is the European Community that has not. One member of NAFO, the European Community, has not paid any attention to all the quotas that have been set. It has exceeded them regularly.