

S.O. 29

We were told by the Liberal Minister of Fisheries that NAFO will look after that. That is the same group that was precluded from the coast of North America, from Florida north, by virtue of the 200-mile limit. The only waters available to an international fishing fleet without regulation are on the nose and tail of the bank. That was surrendered without a fight as we so generously put them on the table to the detriment of the fishing industry. NAFO will not do the surveillance or designate anyone with authority to do the surveillance. It is fished indiscriminately and our efforts to maintain stocks at a reasonable level just cannot be maintained as long as that very fruitful area is left without surveillance and fished indiscriminately. We also gave permits to fish within our 200-mile limits to Cuba. That country already had its own 200-mile limit and in no way needed more fishing territory.

That is the history of the Liberal Party. It was received with great disfavour by the voters who pretty well cleaned the Liberals out in the Gaspé, the east coast of New Brunswick, and a few in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. That is the reception their policy got and they are trying to say that they looked after the fishermen. The voters did not think so then and they will not think so later. From the abandonment of our fish, to the abandonment of the seal hunt, right straight through to the nose and tail of the bank, the Liberal policy failed and the voters told them so. Any pretense that France has not given up many of its rights or that the treaties are still not in place is just that, a pretense. The only treaty the Hon. Member for Egmont mentioned which is not in force is that part which allowed the metropolitan fleet into the gulf area. That expired in 1986. The rest of the treaty is still in place. They will still fish without surveillance by virtue of a Liberal treaty.

It is a sad day when an issue cannot be debated on its merits and on its truth and when the people of Canada cannot rely on the statements of those who would incite, excite and mislead them. It is a deplorable situation that the Party which did so much of that in this debate has vacated the House to the last man. The Party that moved the motion now has one Member in the House. That is the seriousness with which this debate has been taken. I hope Canadians will note that. Canadians have been misled by their speeches. That is the reputation those two Parties put together for themselves.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, I want to participate very briefly in this emergency debate for really just one reason. I want to give an overview of how I, as a Member from Atlantic Canada, see this issue. Let me begin by saying that Atlantic Canada has a very proud and ancient history. It did not start in 1867 with Confederation. It started centuries before that and very much involved the Atlantic fishery. It very much involved fishermen from France, Spain and Portugal who travelled here at great risk to fish the waters of the North Atlantic. We in Atlantic Canada know the contribution Europeans have made to the Atlantic fishery. We know the history of Atlantic Canada on land and in the ocean.

We know the Province of Newfoundland, which is so affected by the issue of stocks in the Atlantic fishery, was founded by those who braved the Atlantic waters in search of fish they needed to feed their people. We know the history and recognize the facts.

Today, in 1987, the fishery is one of the richest resources in the world. In a world starved for protein we now recognize, once and hopefully for all time, the importance of the fish resources of Atlantic Canada. I hope every Canadian from the East Coast to the West Coast recognizes its value just as we recognize the value of the oil resources of Alberta and the grain resources of the prairie provinces. It is in this connection that we must move to protect this resource and preserve it for all Canadians. In order to protect that resource we must recognize the history of all the nations which were involved in the Atlantic fishery, which history extends back 500 years or more. I am sure all Canadians remember the voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492 which led to the discovery of North America, the voyages of Jacques Cartier and all the other explorers, and the proud history of Newfoundland and Atlantic Canada. This is all part of our heritage and we understand that very clearly in Atlantic Canada.

• (0130)

The historic event which gives rise to the difficulty which we face on the floor of the House of Commons today is the establishment of the 200-mile economic zone. The establishment of that zone is the most important incident which we have to deal with in this context. All those centuries were compressed to result in the imposition of the 200-mile zone. Therefore, those who say that there was a simple solution, that something very simple could have been done to right the problems of 500 or 600 years, are not dealing with reality.

Only 30 years ago the Soviets, for example, plundered the fishery of Atlantic Canada. Many nations took whatever fish stocks they could by whatever methods they could employ. There was absolutely no control on the fish stocks off the Atlantic coast. Only when the economic zone was established in 1972 were we able to get any control over the situation.

It has taken a long process of evolution to get us to this point. As well as recognizing the history, we must recognize what was involved in the dramatic event of the establishment of the 200-mile economic zone. When it was established we all knew that nothing would change overnight. We gained control of the zone through a long process.

The subject of this emergency debate is the participation of France in the Atlantic fishery. We very recently had the same problem with Spain which fished in Atlantic Canada for centuries. Spain is now excluded from the zone through actions of the Government of Canada in order to protect that fish resource for Canadians. We have turned away the followers of Christopher Columbus who fished in Atlantic waters for centuries. We required those fishermen to adhere to agreements established through the European Economic Community.