

tive at this conference who is knowledgeable on fisheries matters and who has the entire industry at heart, otherwise the discussions will bog down on questions of jurisdiction over seabed minerals while pollution control and the preservation of fisheries resources become issues of a secondary nature. This must not be allowed to happen.

• (4:40 p.m.)

We learned only recently that no progress has been made in talks between Canada and the United States to establish the median line which crosses Georges Bank and which should be an international boundary line dividing this section of the offshore banks between Canada and the United States. This boundary was established at the 1958 Geneva convention on the continental shelf on the basis of the median line between neighbouring coasts being the international boundary.

Since 1964, we have seen Ottawa issuing seismic exploration permits covering the northeast corner of the bank to a number of oil companies. But this begs the question. Is Ottawa following the proper course? If oil is discovered on Georges Bank, who will own this resource, Canada or the United States? Who will collect royalties if oil is found? Then again, if a major mishap occurs followed by an oil spill, who will clean up the mess? Who will pay for cleaning up the oil and which government will reimburse our fishermen for the losses they incur as a result of oil polluted waters? Will it be Canada or the United States? These are all very important questions, and they are questions which can only be resolved by an alert minister of fisheries, since obviously the Secretary of State for External Affairs is asleep at the switch, incapable or unable to reach agreement with the United States with regard to them.

Another area of concern is the thorny fisheries dispute involving Canada and the government of France which owns the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. In 1964 Parliament passed the Territorial Seas and Fishing Zones Act establishing a 12-mile limit off Canada's east coast. The Secretary of State for External Affairs at that time, the Hon. Paul Martin, told this House that the terms of the legislation were to be implemented as soon as possible. Well, they have not been implemented yet. It is true bits and pieces have been put into effect, and I will not detract from the efforts of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry. I think he is giving of himself in a manner unlike that of any previous Liberal minister of fisheries. He has worked hard at his job, but his job is a very complicated and difficult one.

**Mr. McGrath:** And now he is giving it up.

**Mr. Crouse:** And now, as my hon. friend from St. John's East says, it appears he is giving it up. These are situations which concern us. As I said, the legislation passed in 1964 has not been fully implemented and at the rate we are going our fishermen will have a new understanding of the meaning of the word eternity. I would ask the minister this question: is the median line the bone of contention in the dispute between Canada and France? I refer to the line which is in dispute between Canada and the United States as it crosses Georges

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Bank? This is a question which affects our territorial rights and fishing zones vis-à-vis the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. This is an important point and one which must be resolved, because the Secretary of State for External Affairs has indicated to us that Canada accepts the median line as the dividing line between Canada and the United States where it crosses Georges Bank. Are we being hoist on our own petard if we accept that median line as the dividing line, the international boundary line, between Canada and the United States? Do we accept this as the dividing line between Canada and the French-owned islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon?

If so, I should like to know whether the median line is the dividing line accepted by the French government. If this is the case it would appear we are issuing seismic survey permits and oil drilling permits with respect to sections of the continental shelf which may well be claimed by France. These are some of the questions which the present minister of fisheries has been unable to resolve. These are problems which have been given the brush-off by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Oh, he goes to international conferences, but when he returns and we ask him whether he has consulted with the French with regard to these and other matters he tells us he has not had the time. And when we ask him what progress is being made with regard to them he says they are still under discussion. This is not good enough.

What about our swordfish industry? The United States food and drug directorate has established a rule that five parts of mercury per million is a tolerable level of mercury but that no fish containing more than this amount of mercury is acceptable as an import into the United States. I know the minister has made representations to the United States authority to ascertain whether this standard could be relaxed in order that we might retain our swordfish industry. Some 50 ships will be tied up on the south shore of Nova Scotia alone as a result of these developments, throwing 300 men out of work through no fault of their own. These men are desperately seeking an alternative form of employment. Here again is a matter which should exercise the concern of a minister of fisheries who has no other duties but to look after this particular primary industry.

Speaking of mercury pollution, another question occurs to me. Has the same level for fitness for human consumption been set for tuna, for example? If so, does cooking the tuna lower the mercury content? Swordfish are sold fresh. Could they be processed in any way so that this delicious seafood could once again be made acceptable?

I could go on for another hour talking about the fishing industry—

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Private Members' Hour begins at five o'clock.

**Mr. Crouse:** —but I am reminded that Private Members' Hour is approaching, so I shall not detain hon. members further at this time. But for the reasons I have given, I am happy to support the amendment which has been moved by my hon. friend from St. John's East. I