

I am well aware of the position put forward by our government representatives at the recent conference on the Law of the Sea at Caracas, but despite our best efforts the conference ended without a draft treaty or agreement settling either ownership of marine resources or the width of a coastal state's jurisdiction over those fisheries resources adjacent to its own shores. I do not attach any blame to our negotiators for this situation. I am told that they worked hard. I was not there, but I am informed they worked hard and diligently in putting forward Canada's position. However, time is running out. For years, going back to 1964, I have been asking the government what it intends to do for our fishermen in Atlantic Canada. I believe we must take a firm stand. This is a view that is shared not only by me but also by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson) and by the former Minister of the Environment, the Hon. Jack Davis.

Both ministers stated prior to the July 8 election that Canada should unilaterally take control of the continental shelf off its coasts, if current Law of the Sea negotiations do not go our way. We have strong precedents for following this course. For example, in 1964 the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act unilaterally established a nine-mile fishing zone contiguous to the three-mile limit. Then in 1970 the territorial sea was unilaterally extended to 12 miles. We next established unilaterally our 100 mile limit Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act and, in my opinion, it is now opportune to implement the pledge of the Prime Minister in the July 8 election to ensure that Canadians have exclusive fishing rights within 200 miles of the Canadian shoreline. We, as Canadians, need this type of management control, not only for the conservation of our fisheries resources, but also for the protection of our deep sea fishermen.

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Foreign fleets have overrun our main fishing areas, bringing disastrous losses to our deep sea operators. For example, Centennial Sea Foods Limited of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, and C.W. McLeod Fisheries Limited of Port Mouton, Nova Scotia, are now in the process of filing claims totalling more than \$225,000 with the Department of External Affairs for damages inflicted by Russian trawlers to lobster traps in July of 1974. Our own Department of the Environment sent officers on an overfly in one of our aircraft to take pictures of these large lobster traps on the decks of the Russian trawlers. There can be no doubt that the Russian fleet is responsible for that, but, they have been responsible in meeting our requests for justice in the past.

What I am concerned about is why it has taken so long for the Department of External Affairs to take up this claim with the Soviet government. I have a letter here from one of the owners of a Canadian ship dated July 11. His name is Crosby McLeod. He made representations to the government, asking it to take up his complaint over his \$170,000 loss. On September 19 he was informed that no formal complaint had been lodged up to that date with the Russian embassy.

When I posed a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) on the subject, he stated that representations had now been made. So they

*The Address—Mr. Crouse*

must only have been made since September 19, even though the loss occurred way back on July 11.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** The government has been on holidays.

**Mr. Crouse:** This is what I was going to say next. Nothing could better exemplify the holiday spirit which has prevailed with the present government.

The delay in taking up this claim with the Soviet government by our Department of External Affairs is inexcusable and unexplainable. I ask the government, and especially the Secretary of State for External Affairs, if they are going to wait until the companies concerned go out of business due to their heavy losses before any effort is made to secure restitution from the Soviets?

I am pleased to see the new Minister of State for Fisheries (Mr. LeBlanc) in his seat and I congratulate him upon his appointment to this new portfolio.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I hope he is better treated than his predecessor.

**Mr. Crouse:** I should like to ask him—and I am sure he will answer in due course—what steps he has taken, since receiving this appointment to the cabinet, to restore the Canadian swordfishing industry, worth at one time some \$4 million annually to the fishermen of Nova Scotia alone. At present a fleet of 20 swordfishing boats is operating out of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Fishermen operating out of that port are being paid \$1.70 per pound for swordfish. Obviously the warnings of the U.S. food and drug directorate about mercury in swordfish are having no effect whatsoever in Massachusetts.

I hope the minister will make it a priority project to visit Washington soon to discuss with his American counterpart the possibility of restoring this important industry, for at one time Canada exported to the United States some 25 million pounds of swordfish annually.

I also hope that the minister will give consideration to opening up the Canadian market for swordfish because there is no reason why we should let Massachusetts alone enjoy this delicacy from the sea. Many Canadians would enjoy a swordfish dinner and perhaps the minister could lend his good offices to the opening up of the Canadian market to our fishermen. It would be a great boon for the Nova Scotia fishermen.

Another serious problem faced by our fishermen is—

**Mr. Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member as he is beginning to develop a new point. However, I wish to advise him that his time has expired.

**Mr. Crouse:** I have only a few more observations and I ask for the indulgence of the House to complete my remarks.

**Some hon. Members:** Continue.

**Mr. Crouse:** I thank the House through you, Mr. Speaker, for its indulgence in permitting me to complete my remarks. I can assure you I shall not be very long.

As I started out to say, another serious problem faced by fishermen in Atlantic Canada is the ICNAF regulations which are considered unrealistic and unworkable. The