

Government Organization Act, 1970

questions, I would like to know whether any progress has been made in aquaculture.

Today's commercial fishermen face tough going. We have pollution, which takes up a lot of the minister's time, foreign fleets, depleted stocks, aging boats, rising costs and rising competition in our markets. The prospect of a whole new arm of the fishing industry in coastal towns means strength and support where it is needed and would be helpful—right at home.

What steps is the government taking to encourage and develop aquaculture? What are we doing to increase stocks of salmon for both commercial and sport fishing? What steps are we taking to protect our existing salmon stocks from overfishing in the high seas? This point was thoroughly dealt with by the hon. member for St. John's East. It bears repeating. We have learned that the Minister of Fisheries is required to go to Denmark in order to discuss overfishing of Atlantic salmon by that country while only this week the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries is meeting in Halifax. I wonder why this move is necessary. Why can this problem not be adequately dealt with by the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries?

I would like to have some information about the 1973 Law of the Sea conference. The first meeting preliminary to the 1973 Geneva conference ended on March 31 with the formation of a subcommittee instructed to prepare a preliminary agenda for the 1973 convention. The next preliminary meeting is scheduled for July and August of this year. It is my understanding that the subcommittees working to reach agreement with the 86 nations participating in the convention are probably the key to success or failure of the convention.

What is the policy to be proposed by the United States at the convention, especially with regard to coastal jurisdiction over fisheries resources? This is a very important point, especially to Canada. Are the Soviet Union and Japan lobbying for or against coastal jurisdiction? If they are lobbying against it, what are we going to do about it? This morning a representative of the Newfoundland Fish Trade Council, Mr. Gus Etchegary, appeared before the committee. He told us that in his opinion there were doubts whether the 1973 international convention of the Law of the Sea would be held. We have been told that some Latin American countries are working against holding the conference. The reason is quite understandable. They have already established their territorial seas as being 200 miles from their coastlines. They certainly are not interested in negotiating a 12-mile limit.

What is Canada doing to obtain agreement on our proposals on coastal jurisdiction? Whenever we ask these questions of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, whom I am glad to see in his seat tonight, or the Minister of Fisheries, we only get vague answers. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has a pleasing personality. I do not dislike him. However, I submit that as Minister of Finance he was a failure. He has won the distinction of being a failure in his own time as Secretary of State for External Affairs. I say this because the Prime Minister is travelling in Russia and announcing a foreign policy for

Canada, the details of which are unknown to the hon. member for Eglinton.

This was evident today when the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond asked him a question about the threat to our national identity as posed by the United States. Evidently the Secretary of State for External Affairs does not know that his leader has claimed in Moscow that we as Canadians must affirm an independent foreign policy in the face of "the over-powering presence of the United States of America". What rubbish! What rot!

It is obvious that we are no longer held in high regard or esteem by our former European allies, because the Secretary of State for External Affairs, according to reports, is unable to obtain agreement from these fishing nations to respect our laws dealing with fisheries conservation and management. As a result of waffling and wavering, we have seen our inshore industry destroyed and the offshore fishery resource seriously decimated. Stocks of haddock are almost extinct. Our stocks of herring are down to something like 75 per cent of their abundance of 10 years ago. Redfish, yellowtail and hake are three other species which are showing signs of complete depletion.

It is obvious that the minister of the environment who will also be Minister of Fisheries, with approximately 13,000 workers under him, will have more than enough work cut out for the next few years, if he is there that long. We need an international fisheries branch within the fisheries department which has as members of its senior staff a number of experts on international matters. I hope the minister will give this matter urgent consideration in view of the obvious need and complete neglect of the fisheries problem by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and in view of the serious international negotiations which must be undertaken by fisheries officials in order to salvage this important basic industry.

Finally, I want to point out that we do not need another study of our problems. We have had studies at the provincial level, the federal level, the federal-provincial level, the industry level and the international level. What we are now hoping and asking for is some action. I am concerned that the government, instead of upgrading the fisheries department has now placed it some 40 fathoms down on its administrative ladder.

One other point is with regard to the estimates of the department of the environment which total approximately \$73,465,000. I serve on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. From time to time witnesses appear before that committee. When we question an expenditure they are trained to tell us that it was approved by Parliament. I want to state this evening that, as a member of the fisheries committee, the estimates of that department have not been approved by the committee. We simply have not had an opportunity to deal with them. We have been dealing with clean air, clean water and everything else under the sun, but the estimates of the Department of Fisheries have not been scrutinized by the members of the committee. As has already been pointed out, we are not certain we can even get another half day to study the departmental expenditures, with