

The Address—Mr. Comeau

which faces us is that one of these boats, the *Bluenose*, which has been operating in my riding for quite a while, has to leave the wharf in order that the other vessel can come in. What a situation! The captain of the *Bluenose* needs to remain at the wharf. He needs telephone and water services; he cannot just put out to sea at any time. Nevertheless, he has to get out simply because the other ferry is coming in.

This summer all kinds of foreign vessels docked at Yarmouth. People from Digby, who are faced with a similar situation, were making use of the harbour. They were told, as I was two years ago, that Digby harbour was to be developed as a fantastic harbour serving the needs of Digby county as a whole. Nothing happened. This summer, Mr. Speaker, part of the wharf collapsed and a fellow almost got killed before tenders were put out for the repair of the structure.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Comeau: It is a terrible situation when you have to wait for structures to collapse before action is taken. The engineers in Halifax, in the regional offices, have been recommending that work be done for years. But the minister in Ottawa cannot understand the situation. With regard to another place in my riding Annapolis Royal, the minister told me, as an excuse for not building a wharf, that the export trade was slackening off. What kind of nonsense is that? Where did he get his statistics? I have not found such statistics anywhere. Certainly the government of Nova Scotia did not give him those figures. What bothers me is that the Speech from the Throne refers to the need for anticipating and planning. The government waits for the walls to collapse around it before taking any action. I suggest the government does not know the meaning of the word "planning".

• (3:10 p.m.)

I return to my main topic. The Department of Fisheries issued a statement two days ago stating that the ICNAF nations have agreed not to fish for haddock on the Grand Banks, effective as of today, October 23, until the end of the year. This is really quite amusing because in fact there is now no haddock on the Grand Banks. The government should have taken action a few years ago in this regard. It should have called a Law of the Sea Conference for the purpose of planning proper conservation methods. Had that been done, there would be no need for the present restrictions. The situation, Mr. Speaker, is becoming very serious. The minister has made some fantastic speeches on the subject of the fisheries, but either he does not have the influence he should have with his colleagues or he is unable to convince them that action should be taken. Many times he seems to be talking in the right vein, but it seems he cannot get their co-operation.

I have before me a bulletin issued by the Fisheries Council of Canada in September last. I shall read one paragraph from the bulletin as follows:

It is now generally agreed that stocks of haddock and red fish are virtually extinct on the Grand Banks and flounder is in

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the process of being depleted. Furthermore, it is unmistakably clear that inshore cod stocks are less and less dependable due to continuing fishing efforts by foreign fleets.

Five years ago no one talked about the fisheries being depleted. Everybody thought there was a great deal of fish in the sea. Today there is evidence that haddock, herring, halibut, flounder and cod have almost become a rarity. Because of the shortage of these fish they are becoming expensive to buy. The inshore fishery is having a hard time.

Mr. McGrath: Soon there will be no Department of Fisheries.

Mr. Comeau: And soon there will be no Department of Fisheries. Where has the government been for the last couple of years? Why did it take an accident on the west coast before Canada and Russia got together? Two ships had to collide to get both countries together to talk about the depletion of the fisheries on the west coast. No mention was made of the east coast, so I suppose it will need an accident on the east coast to bring these two countries together to talk about the problems of the fishery on the east coast. When you have foreign fishing fleets consisting of 70 vessels, 50 vessels, 35 vessels fishing off the east coast, believe me, Mr. Speaker, the problems are very serious.

The Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) has an interest in the fisheries and know that fishing is vital to the Atlantic provinces. Yet Canada has taken no initiative in the calling of a Law of the Sea Conference. Although the subject has been talked about for many years, Canada has taken no initiative in this regard. According to the Fisheries Council of Canada, it may already be too late. It may be that we cannot afford to wait for a Law of the Sea Conference. We must take the initiative to bring the fishing countries together, because Canada is heavily dependent upon the fisheries.

The department must convince Canadians that there is a livelihood to be derived from fishing and that that means of livelihood should be maintained. I am not saying that our fishermen are starving, but I am saying that we must do much more planning to conserve the fisheries than has been the case in the past. We must take proper conservation measures so that we put an end to the depletion of our fishing stocks.

Some Canadians think that the programs under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion benefit Atlantic Canada only. That sort of thing makes me mad. Grants are given to all regions of Canada under this program, not only to Atlantic Canada. Let us not try to create the impression that the central government is pouring too much money into the Atlantic provinces. If the government had carried out proper planning in the past, it would not be necessary to spend this money today. The Atlantic provinces are not getting any more than they need and deserve.

As I have said, the fisheries are vital to the Atlantic provinces. Another vital issue is the establishment of a 12-mile limit. Although we have been since 1964 talking of doing this, there are still eight nations which can come