

Private Members' Business

and it is an absolutely intolerable situation that we as Canadians have to join together and say this is intolerable. It cannot continue.

The Americans simply move the AB line out of the treaty of 1903 or 1904 and say that they are going to allow petroleum drilling in an area that is shown on Canadian maps as Canadian territory. Absolutely unacceptable.

• (1740)

The Americans run nuclear submarines through there, and this government concedes to it. The previous government conceded to it. The government of British Columbia and most of the communities in the area have designated themselves as nuclear-free zones for the purpose of communicating more to the Canadian agencies than the Americans, that this is the desire of Canadians, to remove nuclear vessels and their threat from the area.

The Law of the Sea Conference was an area in which the Canadian government and the delegates acquitted themselves very well. The intent was to give sovereign states jurisdiction over the surrounding coasts and oceans. But we have seen the Canadian government renege on drift-net fishing and from 1980 till today, we have seen Liberal governments and Conservative governments ignore the issues of drift-net fishing.

One of the worst examples of our neglect of our marine environment, and the intent I think of the Law of the Sea Conference, was the efforts that Canada exerted to try and get national control of an anadromous species, the salmon of the west coast. We are now almost in a war with the United States over that species.

We began a long process under the Liberal government in the late seventies, early eighties, of negotiating an interception treaty on the west coast, the Salmon Interception Treaty. We felt that we were completely sold out by the Conservative government that needed some kind of throwaway for the first visit of Ronald Reagan to his corporate vice-president here in Canada and we wound up with a situation at Quebec City where that fishery was literally thrown away.

Today we are faced with a new fish war arising in the United States where the Americans are saying that the Fraser River stocks, which are part of the old Hell's Gate

problem where the Canadians allowed the Americans to come in and build the fish ladders and claim half the stocks out of the Fraser River. That is absolutely intolerable.

Canadians who live on the west coast wonder where is their federal government. They are under the impression that the Pacific fisheries are a complete throwaway, that if there is a problem with an auto treaty or an auto agreement in central Canada, then elements of the Pacific coast fisheries can be thrown away.

In this House of Commons we need to see the government spend more attention and serious attention to those fisheries. They are worth a billion dollars a year. They are not throwaway items, they are absolutely critical to native people, to the people who live on the coast of British Columbia, and they need to be stood up for.

The Pacific coast fishery should be turned over to the province of British Columbia with the full cost from this federal government, probably in tax points, to cover the cost of the operation. British Columbians care about that resource, they care about the people who depend on the resource, their enhancement, survival and protection. The government in Ottawa over the years has demonstrated that it does not care for it.

I am just absolutely appalled about the Dixon Entrance issue, about the Pacific coast salmon interception. When we talk about the Law of the Sea we have to look at the total perspective.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, I hope the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod will get lost in the halls of Parliament on his way here so that I may have at least a minute or two to make a few comments.

Let me say that the motion that is before us today calls on the Government of Canada to take the necessary steps to ratify the international Law of the Sea.

It should be noted that what Parliament is being asked to do, what the government is being asked to do, is to take the necessary steps to ratify an international convention that I think most Canadians thought had been ratified. The fact of the matter is that it has been nearly a decade, 10 years, since 119 nations, including Canada, signed the Law of the Sea.