

Canada, both through our laws and regulations, the participation of the federal Department of Fisheries in studies and discussions with national fishing organizations, and through its very active and continuous participation in the proceedings of international agencies such as ICNAF, the Conference on the Law of the Sea, etc.

Fisheries, Mr. Speaker, as all hon. members know, have a very special and privileged position in the history of Canada. This is the most ancient Canadian primary industry. I suggest to the numerous members present this afternoon that the first international agreement between Canada—as an independent country—and a foreign country was the halibut treaty signed with the United States, in 1923, for the protection of halibut reserves in the Pacific ocean.

Moreover, the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, created in 1898, is the oldest research organization sponsored by the Canadian government.

The importance of commercial fishing in Canada—it has to be admitted—has relatively decreased for some time and the advent of the industrial era which thanks to God invaded our country brought about scores of industries of all kinds that took away an important part of the people who were practising agriculture and fishing.

In spite of the considerable industrialization that our country has known, fisheries remain, Mr. Speaker, of very great economic importance for our coastal provinces. Canadian fishermen catch over 150 species of fish or shell-fish around our harbours on the Atlantic Northwest and the Pacific Northwest. Fishermen and the Canadian fishing industry have invested \$200 million for the purchase of boats, equipment and gear of various sorts and investments in land facilities exceed \$100 million. Some 80,000 Canadians are employed in an industry directly related to fishing. Of those, roughly 30,000 depend directly on the catches for their livelihood.

Mr. Speaker, it is advisable to point out at this stage that, for a large number of fishermen from the east coast of Canada, including those in my riding, Bonaventure-Îles de la Madeleine, this direct reliance on fisheries is total, since it is their sole source of income. Hence, the pressing necessity to take adequate measures even if they are strict.

If we want to assure to an important sector of the Canadian population a continuous and sufficient supply of this natural resource for future generations, the federal government and the provincial governments, which in some provinces have jurisdiction over fisheries, have the duty to take action.

As I said earlier, Canada and the Fisheries Department in particular have certainly not been lagging in that field. You will remember, for instance, that after the failure of the Law of the Sea Conference of 1958 and 1960 to settle the issue of the extent of the territorial sea and the limits of jurisdiction over fisheries, despite efforts and campaigns conducted by Canada in favour of the proposal establishing the territorial sea of 3 miles with the addition of the fishing area of 9 miles and then the formula of 6 miles plus 6 miles, the Canadian government did not hesitate to go forward.

Marine Resources Development Study

Those who were sitting in the House in 1964—and you were one of them, Mr. Speaker, although you are primarily concerned with the sporting point of view—will remember that as a result of this failure, the Liberal government elected in 1963 and the Minister of Fisheries, hon. Hédard Robichaud had suggested the adoption of an exclusive fishing area of 9 miles contiguous to the 3 miles of the territorial sea. Thus, Canada has been one of the strongest advocates of this proposal.

As the many members present here this afternoon are aware, this courageous action of the Canadian government has not been readily accepted throughout the world. However, we can say that the contiguous area established in 1964 to protect our domestic fisheries is now recognized under international law.

But the latest developments in the field of the fishing industry have been marked by the sophistication of fishing boats and equipment both in Canada and in the other countries involved in this industry. Moreover, the alarming extermination of certain species meant imminent extinction for some of them because of overexploitation by Canadian fishermen and well-equipped foreign fishermen who came and still come with huge factory ships to rake the bottom of our seas and catch this natural resources, to the extent that the government and particularly our fishermen grew exceedingly disturbed. This demonstrated that the 12 mile exclusive limit for fishing, excellent 10 or 15 years ago when we had affluence, no longer has its original magic character.

Faced with the indecision of international organizations as to the establishment of efficient legislation intended to protect our fisheries in general, particularly our off-shore fisheries, the Canadian government felt once more that it had to take unilateral while always bearing in mind the interests of the fishermen, of the Canadian citizen and consequently of Canada as a whole.

Therefore we have seen this government introduce a series of amendments to the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act establishing exclusively Canadian fishing zones in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for instance, as well as in the Bay of Fundy, the Dixon Entrance, the Hecate Strait, the Queen Charlotte Sound on the Pacific coast. At the same time and under the same legislation, Canada extended its territorial waters from 3 to 12 miles.

Of course, this Canadian initiative has not been accepted by all countries. There are varying opinions in this respect. Canada could have gone farther and claimed historically and geographically, full sovereignty on what is known as the "special water expanse". But the government has elected to guarantee our exclusive jurisdiction over fishing and, through another legislation, over pollution control in order to avoid any clashes that would jeopardize the forthcoming 1973 Conference on the Law of the Sea.

On the other hand, the interests of other countries directly affected by Canada's action have been taken into account and negotiations have been initiated with them with a view to obtaining that they phase out their traditional fishing practices in Canada's offshore waters.

Today, Mr. Speaker, it is heartening to note that the negotiations in regard to fishing, aiming at the withdrawal