

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

Atlantic to follow the example of Iceland and extend their fishing limits to 12 miles, can the minister advise the house if the Canadian government recognizes the extension of the fishing limit to a 12-mile width of waters off their coasts, as announced by the government of Iceland?

**Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** I will accept that question as notice.

**Mr. Robichaud:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, which the minister may also take as notice. In view of the statement made in Halifax on Sunday, June 8, by the Minister of Fisheries to the effect that Canada would try to obtain a compromise arrangement concerning the 12-mile fishing limit at the next conference on the law of the sea, can the minister advise the house if the government has altered its so-called firm stand on a 12-mile limit to a compromise position on future negotiations?

RUSSIA—OPERATION OF SHIPS OFF  
NEWFOUNDLAND

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. J. R. Tucker (Trinity-Conception):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Would the minister comment on the presence of Soviet ships operating off the banks of Newfoundland in a manner calculated to give rise to suspicion and anxiety on the part of the people of Newfoundland?

**Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his intention to ask this question. My colleague the Minister of National Defence has graciously undertaken to answer it.

**Hon. G. R. Pearkes (Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, it has been reported to me that Soviet vessels have been operating off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. These ships have been operating outside of Canadian territorial waters. I am sure the hon. member for Trinity-Conception noticed, as I did, the statement of the Russian minister of fisheries made in Halifax the other day to the effect that these Russian ships were carrying out scientific surveys of fish migrations in the area. I would suggest that the residents of Newfoundland should not be unduly exercised by this fishy business, as the area is patrolled by the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force.

[*Later:*]

**Mr. C. W. Carter (Burin-Burgeo):** May I ask a supplementary question of the Minister of National Defence arising out of the reply

he gave to the hon. member for Trinity-Conception. Would the minister take steps to verify reports that these Russian trawlers operating on the banks of Newfoundland are totally blacked out at night and do not carry even the ordinary navigation lights, thereby constituting a menace to shipping operating on the banks? If the reports are verified, would he inquire as to why such a practice would be necessary for ships that are engaged merely in tracking fish migration?

**Mr. Pearkes:** I would be pleased to get a report on that matter.

LAOS, CAMBODIA, VIET NAM—STATEMENT ON  
STATUS OF CONTROL COMMISSIONS

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member for Essex East asked me a question concerning the status of the international commissions in Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam. With respect to the part of the question concerning Laos, may I say that in November, 1957, an agreement was reached between the royal Laotian government and the dissident Pathet Lao. This agreement provided for integration of the Pathet Lao into the Laotian national community and also provided for supplementary elections to be held in a few months' time to give representation in the national assembly to the Pathet Lao. These elections were held on May 4, 1958.

During the past two months the royal Laotian government has twice requested the international commission to leave Laos after the May 4 elections. It expressed the view that these elections represented the final stage of the political settlement provided for in the cease-fire agreement on Laos which was signed at Geneva in 1954.

It is also the Canadian government's view that, with the achievement of a political settlement in Laos and with the fulfilment of the terms of the cease-fire agreement, the tasks of the international commission for supervision and control have come to an end. The Canadian government considers that the indefinite extension of international agencies of this kind after their tasks have been completed will tend to bring the whole concept of international supervision into disrepute.

For this general reason, and in support of a request of the royal Laotian government, the Canadian delegation to the international commission was instructed to introduce a resolution calling for the dissolution of the commission. The Indian and Polish delegations are opposed to dissolution, and as yet no final solution has been reached.