

FISHERIES

UNITED STATES POSITION WITH RESPECT TO EAST COAST
SCALLOP FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. On Monday the minister assured the House that he would ask the Secretary of Commerce if he would be prepared to intervene, as he is permitted to do under American law, and put some pressure on the regional councils to restrict the increasing scallop fishery on the east coast. Did the minister raise that issue? Does he have some assurances—not the assurances that the Secretary of State for External Affairs gave us earlier in the day—and some firm commitment from the Secretary of Commerce that there will be a restriction on the scallop fishery to protect those stocks?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): In my conversations with Secretary Baldrige I made it clear that, independently of what had happened in relation to the fisheries treaty, the fact remains that the stocks which could be subject to arbitration are stocks which are not independently and fully in the interests of the United States or fully in the interests of Canada either. For that reason they cannot be considered to be national stocks.

I made the point that the requirements of conservation were overriding in this situation. I asked the Secretary to make sure that the management plan, which was discussed in the President's letter to Senator Percy, I believe it was, be put into effect. The Secretary undertook to have consultations with his own officials and with the regional councils and that our officials and his would be speaking in the days to come. I hope that we are able to effect a conservation plan which has nothing to do with, or is quite independent of, the other issues in this situation.

Mr. Miller: Madam Speaker, I do not think that we can really assure the Nova Scotia fishermen that there are really any guarantees that there will not be a continuing escalation of the fishing effort there.

NEGOTIATION OF WEST COAST TREATY

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): I would now like to ask the minister a question with respect to the west coast. I am not attempting to link one to the other, in terms of negotiations, but I think there is a linkage in terms of the attitude of the U.S. toward both the east coast and the west coast fisheries.

In view of the fact that many of the negotiating teams under the Carter administration have been dismissed by President Reagan, did the minister raise the issue of the west coast treaty? Will Dr. Lee Alverson, who is well respected and largely responsible for the progress with respect to that treaty, be retained as the American negotiator? Did the minister receive assurances that, indeed, those negotiations will lead to a fair and equitable treaty for the Canadian fishermen as well as the American fishermen?

Oral Questions

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, the issue of Dr. Alverson's mandate was not discussed.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POLICY RESPECTING SIGNING OF TREATIES WITH UNITED
STATES

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, if I heard the Secretary of State for External Affairs correctly in response to the questions put by the hon. member for Durham-Northumberland, he just made a rather significant statement on policy. In response to the questions put by my colleague with respect to the process to be followed in treaty ratifications, the minister said that in that instance, if it were a new treaty, a guarantee that the U.S. Senate would approve it would be sought beforehand. That was the specific nature of the question and answer. If I heard the minister correctly, my understanding is that the policy of the government now when it enters into treaties of a general nature which require Senate approval, is that it will be requiring specific Senate approval before a treaty is signed. Would that be a correct interpretation of the policy of the government?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I do not intend to go so far today as to announce a new policy for all treaties with the United States. Certainly, our disposition at this point is that in a case where there is a question, because of the nature of the negotiations, that there might not be subsequent ratification by the Senate, to seek some kind of assurance from the senators in advance either in the form of a resolution, in the form of letters or in the form of direct assurances which are funnelled through the Secretary of State, to seek assurances from the U.S. Senate before the treaty is signed that it will be ratified by the Senate.

Mr. Nielsen: Madam Speaker, that is a very interesting response. The minister uses the term "assurances" and previously he used the term "guarantee".

Where such treaties with countries other than the United States require some form of ratification by legislatures in those other countries, will it be the intention of this government to follow the same kind of policy as it intends to follow with the United States?

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, there certainly is no problem of this kind with any other country, and we have no plans to apply such a test to other countries. Our problem is peculiarly with the Senate and, in particular, the foreign relations committee of the United States Senate.