

Minister of the Environment and Minister of Fisheries? At any rate, apart from the minister there are to be a deputy minister, a senior assistant deputy minister and nine assistant deputy ministers and directors general, of whom one will be the assistant deputy minister of fisheries. In our opinion and in the opinion of those who have studied the legislation and this division of authority, it is difficult for anyone to believe that the government realizes the importance of this industry to Atlantic Canada or to the nation as a whole. Under this division of authority we cannot help asking who will be taking the initiative in helping to solve some of the many problems which were so adequately described only a moment ago by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate.

Ever since 1964—that is going back a long way, Mr. Chairman—when the Liberal party was rich in promises we have heard about great policies and programs for the fishing industry. We heard the then Secretary of State for External Affairs promise that the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act would be implemented immediately. Mr. Chairman, this is 1971 and only now is that legislation in the process of being implemented. For that I give marks to the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crouse: At least he is working on it. But he has a long way to go. As yet we have no idea of the length of time that will be required for the phasing-out of fishing operations of certain countries which claim they have territorial treaty rights in our waters. It is obvious that we have entered into international agreements but there is no provision for international enforcement. That is where we have fallen down. I have read books and books about meetings which have been held and steps which have been taken. We reach agreements but it is obvious that there is no provision for international enforcement.

For example, the Law of the Sea conference in 1958 approved certain conventions. Article VII provides that a coastal state may adopt conservation measures unilaterally, provided negotiations with affected states are not concluded within a six-month period. This convention is known to the government. It was known in 1964. Fishing interests in Atlantic Canada are still asking: Why did the government not implement article VII? It is interesting to read the article. I will not burden the committee with the entire report which that conference adopted.

There were 86 nations which considered 73 articles of the International Law Commission. In all, they adopted 75 articles and produced international conventions on the continental shelf, on territorial seas and contiguous zones, on the high seas, on fishing and conservation of the living resources of the high seas, and so on. The report states that the convention can be judged to have been an outstanding success. Some of the things that were passed by this conference I believe should be put on the record tonight. They relate to the high seas and, of course, in part to our problems in Atlantic Canada.

One of the articles provides that when conservation measures have been adopted on the high seas by any coastal state, those measures must be observed by fisher-

men from other countries. That was one of the conventions adopted by the international Law of the Sea conference. Another article provides that in emergency situations the coastal state may unilaterally enact necessary conservation measures on the high seas. And so it goes.

We wonder, Mr. Chairman, why these conventions approved at the 1958 conference, many of them having been moved by Canada, have not been acted upon by this government. Their inactivity has resulted in some of the problems that were put on the record tonight by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate. We are now facing serious problems in the depletion of our fisheries resources through overfishing and high seas' pollution due to oil spills and mercury. One area of concern in pollution has to do with swordfish and tuna. I wonder why we devote our arguments and powers of persuasion to the subject of standards for mercury levels in fish. We know that mercury is a poison. It may not be present in quantities sufficient to kill or disable the average meat and fish-eating North American; however, we know from the Japanese experience that the people of fish-eating nations may be severely affected.

• (9:20 p.m.)

For years we in Atlantic Canada have based our hope for the future of the commercial fishing industry on the fact that it would not be much longer before the pressures of population in this country forced us to depend more and more on the resources of the oceans. Therefore, it makes no sense to quibble over a few parts per million of mercury, even though there may be honest doubts as to the correct tolerable levels. These arguments may suffice to extend economical fishing for a few years, but they will do little for future generations which may be faced with the inability of making their living from the sea. I submit there are two courses of action open to this government. We can continue to demand research in the toxicology of pollutants: we can make a plea to the source of the pollution because we cannot continue to tolerate thoughtless disregard of our sea resources.

I ask the minister what progress had been made in determining the source of mercury pollution. This is an important matter. I would like to know what efforts he has made to terminate mercury pollution in the high seas. What steps are we taking to encourage aquaculture in Canada? We are trying to clean up our Great Lakes, but I wonder whether Pacific salmon production techniques can be applied to the Great Lakes with any degree of success. I know that experiments have been carried out, but the minister is so busy—and will be even more busy—that we have not had a paper on the progress which has been made in establishing salmon in the Great Lakes and in some areas of Atlantic Canada.

Sea farming needs acreage, if it is to succeed, especially for the raising of shellfish, the most promising seafood for cultivation. Fish, lobsters and shrimp could well prove to be feasible crops. Considering present technology, clams, oysters and mussels offer the best choices. Sea worms and sea moss are two other promising non-food crops. If the minister has time to answer some of our