

that it was the intention of the government to extend jurisdiction to those areas so as to include groundfish as well to the extent we would have jurisdiction over it and to prosecute the fishery to the full extent on continental slope.

A few years ago the committee on fisheries which examined the estimates unanimously recommended to the government that the fisheries jurisdiction of Canada be extended to the continental shelf and slope. This has been completely ignored by the minister in his statement today and up to this time. There is no indication in the statement that any consideration is being given to that matter. In fact, its phraseology in terms of drawing fisheries closing lines across the entrances to certain waters indicates to me that this matter has in fact been completely ignored.

In dealing with fisheries we must concern ourselves with two fronts: first, the extent to which we can extend our jurisdiction to the edge of the continental slope and, second, the extent to which we can involve ourselves in international agreements with other nations to ensure that the fish of the high seas which originate in our land are preserved to the fishermen of this nation. We have a potential lever which was not used. If the government had taken the action of extending the fisheries closing lines out to the continental shelf and the edge of the continental slope, we might have been able to prevent the minister giving the right to the Soviet Union to fish inside our territorial sea, as he did earlier this year.

To return to the point I made about the degree of faith we should have in the minister, when he was asked in the House about the agreement with the Soviet Union he said he would gladly refer that matter to the standing committee. So far he has forgotten about that as well. I think we need a little more action and concern not only on the part of the Department of Fisheries but also on the part of the Department of External Affairs, and less froth and foam.

[Translation]

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the minister for providing us with an advance copy of the French version of the statement he has just made.

We are very happy that the government has taken these measures, thanks to the excellent work of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry.

Fishermen on the East coast have been requesting a measure of this kind for a very long time, in order to keep for themselves the fish crops, and we are proud of it. Also, in order to control in the future pollution dangers in our territorial waters, such action was called for, I believe.

Therefore, we commend the good work of the minister and we hope he will continue to be interested in fishermen and all interested parties for the greatest good of all Canadians.

Post Office

POST OFFICE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF IMPROVEMENT OF SATURDAY WICKET SERVICE

Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Minister without Portfolio): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that main post offices and most postal stations in urban centres will return to complete counter service on Saturdays.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Côté (Longueuil): This is to replace the limited service offered since the start of five-day week letter carrier delivery in February 1969.

Extensive surveys were taken of the services provided on Saturdays, and these have shown a need to make services such as stamps and money orders available again at the majority of offices studied. However, the surveys also indicated that the need varies widely from city to city and even in different sections of some cities.

[English]

The hours of Saturday service at individual offices and the selection of locations to provide the increased service will, therefore, be determined by community needs. This will be left to the discretion of senior field managers who are familiar with local conditions and service demands. The improved service will begin on a regular basis from January 9, 1971. A Merry Christmas to all Post Office employees and to all customers of the Post Office.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to begin by thanking the minister for his courtesy in providing, in good time and in both languages, copies of his statement. Indeed, I would say to him that his general considerateness and courtesy have detracted somewhat from the spice and enjoyment of the role I am trying to perform on behalf of the Progressive Conservative party.

I am impressed by the strangeness of the fact that it has become necessary to announce in the House of Commons a resumption of postal service to the Canadian people. I appreciate the fact that it is being done but it is surprising that it was necessary that such an announcement be made. I think, Sir, that this action marks another repudiation of the more preposterous and tortuous innovations of the minister's predecessor, and I commend this minister for his willingness to recognize that certain events, incidents and developments of some months ago were in fact very bad mistakes.

● (11:40 a.m.)

I note that it required "extensive surveys of the services provided on Saturday." This, I thought, would hardly have been necessary. No major inquiry should have been required because hosts of Canadians do have difficulty in transacting business with the Post Office on days other than Saturday, and many Canadians combine a visit to the Post Office with their Saturday shopping. I think it was not required to have a massive inquiry into that.