

from the Senate. However, there is considerable pessimism as to its prospects of getting through the House of Representatives before adjournment. Even if it does, it would be subject to presidential acceptance or veto. The indication from the authors of the resolution is that they were looking for ways and means of strengthening the hand of U.S. negotiators. I can say to the hon. member that we have given a very firm and strong instruction to our delegation that we want a 200-mile economic management zone. This is still our position and we still believe we should go the multilateral negotiations route to protect species such as salmon which we could not protect by making a unilateral declaration.

NEWFOUNDLAND—REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION TO AID FISHERMEN

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): In view of the fact that the fishing industry in Newfoundland is on the verge of total collapse because of a decline in catches resulting in a concomitant decline in revenues as a result of our failure to protect our offshore fishery, I ask the minister what immediate interim steps the government is prepared to announce to save the industry and the 21,000 jobs involved in Newfoundland?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of States (Fisheries)): While I do not fully accept the pessimistic view taken by the hon. gentleman, I do recognize that there are some difficulties. However, they are not all attributable to the problem of the regulation of the offshore fishery. Some weeks ago I asked for an internal task force to come up with some recommendations. These recommendations are now ready. I hope to discuss these with my colleagues. I hope to have some better news next week.

● (1130)

Mr. McGrath: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the report of a conciliation board in Newfoundland which stated that the industry was facing immediate total collapse because of declining fish catches to which I have referred, and which went so far as to recommend nationalization as a means of providing immediate emergency relief, is the minister prepared to announce now that the government is going to give emergency interim financial assistance to the industry in order to keep it going until his task force report can be properly studied and long-term measures implemented?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to use the other official language because perhaps I would not stumble on my words. We are looking at the implications of this report. I do not think the hon. gentleman would want us to stand between the companies and the unions in their attempt to come to an agreement following upon this conciliation board report, and we will try not to do that. On the other hand, we recognize that the situation is one of very serious urgency in the short term, and I hope I will have some good news within the next few days.

The task force or working group which will be reporting to me has also been asked to look at the medium term and long term situation, which we are also discussing with the

Oral Questions

responsible authorities in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, in so far as the offshore industry is concerned.

POSSIBLE JOINT ACTION WITH UNITED STATES TO EXTEND OFFSHORE JURISDICTION TO 200 MILES—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. In view of the fact that the United States evidently recognizes that there is a continuing depression in the industry, is the minister taking up bilateral discussions with the United States with a view to taking bilateral action in extending the limits both for the United States and Canada, in order to bring about some settlement or agreement at the next Law of the Sea Conference?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)): Mr. Speaker, we obviously rejoice that the United States authorities share our view that we should have an economic management zone to protect our fishery. In that sense, the co-operation of this very powerful nation would be extremely useful to us at Geneva. But again I remind the House that the 200 mile limit will not solve our problems, and in fact could jeopardize what is at the moment our healthiest fishing industry, which is the salmon.

Mr. Marshall: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that even at the next Law of the Sea Conference we are not sure there will be an international agreement, and in view of the fact that discussions might go on for five years yet, would the minister advise, since he must be thinking about this himself, what immediate action we can take? Because if we do not take immediate action, the fishing industry will become obsolete in the next five years.

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, the immediate action is for us to go to the ICNAF countries. This we are doing, and we had some success at the meeting in Miami some weeks ago. There is a further meeting in Bergen in January and in Edinburgh in June, I believe, and we will endeavour to convince the nations of ICNAF that they must reduce their catches in this area; otherwise, we will find some of the major stock becoming as badly depleted as haddock, for example, has become.

[Translation]

ALLEGED LACK OF ACTIVITY IN DEPARTMENT IN DEVELOPING MARKETS

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I always find myself in this situation where I have to remind the House that there is another province—British Columbia—which has fisheries also.

I would like to put a question to the Minister of State responsible for fisheries, since his department has just given a new impetus to a \$4 million program for the financing of inventory and cold storage, seemingly in order to provide the fishermen with a stable market on the current level. Since current fresh and frozen fish stocks are excessively high, and since fishing boats remain berthed, is this program not an unfavourable comment against his department's direction, and particularly