

*Continental Shelf Boundary*

**Mr. Crouse:** Mr. Speaker, I can only say to the hon. gentleman whose constituency escapes me—

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mississauga.

**Mr. Crouse:**—to the hon. member for Mississauga (Mr. Abbott), who said I was not here to hear the hon. member's speech, that I, as official fisheries critic for the opposition, read the hon. member's speech prior to delivery, which the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe can confirm, and am therefore aware of the arguments he presented to the House.

The hon. member raised a matter of great importance to Atlantic Canada, indeed to the entire nation, as it involves the control and management of the seas and of fishing limits off St. Pierre and Miquelon and jurisdiction over minerals. Actually the value of such offshore resources in the area is unknown at present. Therefore we, as members of parliament, must be aware of what Canada and France discussed regarding the ownership, management, and control of this important area.

The author of the high seas doctrine, the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius, wrote in 1609 that most things become exhausted with promiscuous use. This is not the case with the sea. It can be exhausted neither by fishing nor by navigation, that is to say, in the two ways in which it can be used. The famous jurist was right in his time, but what he said does not apply today. During and even before the three decades since 1945, man found other uses for the seas. It is now used by massive fishing fleets using sophisticated methods which the fishermen have organized, with vacuum cleaning effect. We are considering such points at this time.

We have over-used or, perhaps more properly, misused the sea. Ancient and vast though it is, the sea cannot continue to be exploited and misused in this manner. Like everything else in the world, it has its limits. Human technology, as hon. members know, has now enabled us to fish whole species to virtual extinction. I am thinking of haddock, red fish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and of some of the cod fish in the area.

Man-made pollution from all sources damages fish and bird life and fouls the coastlines we use for recreation. Pollution can even upset oceanographic systems on which we depend for our climate and oxygen supplies.

I could go on at some length about the importance of Canada's establishing some control over this area. At the Law of the Sea negotiations in Geneva last year, which I was privileged to attend, unfortunately there were few discussions about the ownership of the areas surrounding St. Pierre and Miquelon. This, apparently, is considered a grey area. Apparently discussions are going on in secret. But we, as parliamentarians, must treat this question with more seriousness than apparently government supporters have treated it this afternoon. This is a serious and important matter, but it is not the only area in Atlantic Canada causing us concern.

Although what I am about to say may not be relevant to the point raised by the hon. member for Humber-St. Georges-St. Barbe, I would remind the House of difficulties concerning another area off the coast of Atlantic Canada, Georges Bank. The fishermen of Atlantic Canada

are worried about the lack of negotiation and discussion with regard to Georges Bank taking place between the Department of External Affairs and American authorities. Here is an area off the coast of Atlantic Canada in which Canadians claim that the equidistant principle applies. If, in international discussions, that principle finds acceptance, Canada can rightly claim jurisdiction over about three quarters of Georges Bank, where we carry on a prolific scallop, lobster, and haddock fishery, to name just a few species. It is possible that we shall find oil, gas, and minerals in the area.

The Americans say that the equidistant principle does not apply to Georges Bank. They claim that the Fundy channel divides the area between Canada and the United States. If that concept is accepted in international law, Canada stands to lose jurisdiction over about three quarters of Georges Bank.

In support of the American claim the American Department of the Interior recently considered issuing some 206 permits to American oil companies to explore for oil and gas in the area. This is an area containing some 136 prime fishing grounds, of which at least some 50 are the chief spawning areas of haddock, hake, whiting, herring, and yellowtail, to name some of the important species which form the bulwark and main resource of our fisheries in Atlantic Canada. I fail to understand how the government cannot realize how important this area is to Canada.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** They don't care.

**Mr. Crouse:** Obviously they do not care. I know, as a maritimer and Nova Scotian, that the fisheries account for about 2 per cent of our gross national product. We must keep emphasizing this point if the fisheries are to get the recognition to which they are entitled. We always appear to be low man on the totem pole. When we come to the examination of the estimates, the amounts accorded to fisheries and their development are very low.

**Mr. Abbott:** Because you are Tories?

**Mr. Crouse:** The hon. member for Mississauga says it is because we are Tories. I hope that that statement which the hon. member made from his seat, from which he usually makes his statements, which all too often are erroneous, is definitely not correct. I hope that Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland are not being penalized because the people in those provinces prefer the concepts of the Conservatives to the hypocrisy of the Liberal party. I see that time is running on.

● (1750)

**Miss Bégin:** Speak to the motion now.

**Mr. Crouse:** Would the hon. lady like to continue her remarks? I listened quietly, patiently, and politely to her. I do not make it a policy to interrupt. I am sorry I cannot name her constituency.

**Miss Bégin:** Saint-Michel.

**Mr. Crouse:** I follow a course in this House of not interrupting my colleagues or those who support the government.