

I have referred to the situation in British Columbia, to which we received a response. I have mentioned the 12-mile limit on the southwest coast of Newfoundland. In 1973 the maritime nations will again meet at a Law of the Sea conference. These are positive steps and I do not criticize them. However, the fact is that since 1949 nations that were unheard of as marine nations have become involved in the harvesting of our resources. The greatest predator is the U.S.S.R. I do not know if Germany is the second greatest competitor of the Soviet Union, but I believe she is.

● (4:40 p.m.)

There are times when the vessels of more than 20 nations are fishing off our continental shelf. Countries such as Algeria are now constructing fishing fleets hoping to be able to take advantage of the historic rights of France and to operate under the French flag off our coasts. Roumania—this was unheard of in years past—now has great fleets of vessels quite unlike our own small draggers or inshore fishing craft, great processing vessels and dragging vessels which literally declare war on a fishing area. One billion pounds of fish was taken in one year from Hamilton Inlet Banks, the great spawning ground of the Labrador fishery, enough to occupy the largest fishplant in Gander-Twillingate employing 350 people for 100 years. In that year the Soviet Union took 25 per cent of all the fish on the Hamilton Inlet Banks, according to authoritative reports and statements from the Department of Fisheries and ICNAF. The Soviet Union took 250 million pounds of fish from those banks.

The following years saw a decline in the Labrador fishery to the point at which thousands of our Newfoundland fishermen went to the fishery only to come home empty-handed. The fishing was a complete and utter failure. The minister knows why the Labrador fishery has failed. It was the tragic result of overfishing. The oldest traditional fishery in the world, certainly the oldest in North America, has been destroyed; it has been a disastrous, total failure in the last three years as a result of overfishing on the spawning grounds. I invite hon. members to imagine the coast of Labrador. Some 250 miles off Grosswater Bay we come to Hamilton Inlet Banks. Hundreds of vessels were fishing there day after day. The minister knows what happens. He has talked about it on television. He knows how Soviet vessels operate.

Again, let us take what happened on Georges Bank as an example. Three or four years ago news went around that Canadian fisherman were getting good catches of haddock there. The Russians declared war on Georges Bank. They went in with great fleets of ships; it is their practice to move in packs of between 20 and 60 ships. They have 40 ships operating there, including factory ships, medical supply vessels and everything else—a whole community. They declared war on Georges Bank and in that year they destroyed the haddock fishery to the point at which the chances of its spontaneous recovery are most unlikely. Biologists in the Department of

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Fisheries tell us that depletion of stock may have reached the stage at which natural processes cannot replenish it. This is the result of overfishing.

Now the minister tells us we should impose quotas and restrict fishing on Georges Bank. He can do this for a very good reason: there are more haddock in Lake Ontario than there are on Georges Bank at the moment. He is able to impose restrictions on fishing in the area because there are no more fish there. The depletion of stocks had reached such proportions that everyone realized that the time for action had passed. Everyone in Canada interested in the fisheries knew that stocks had disappeared by the time we got round to taking action.

The minister tells us about the patrols we are carrying out, the great effort which Canada is making. At a time when there were 60 foreign vessels off the southwest coast of Newfoundland a few weeks ago, the Canadian response was two small ships trying to patrol the whole of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the coast of Newfoundland. One is a 65-foot vessel called the *Cape Freals*. It would have trouble navigating the Rideau Canal in a high wind. Indeed, it would be just as effective on the Prairies as in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The minister says they are doing a great job, that the crews are even working overtime while still keeping within the departmental budget. He says "You must remember that these men must rest from time to time; they must have time to themselves; they must have weekends off." What a shame, disgrace and embarrassment for the Canadian nation to treat its fisheries, to treat its sovereignty, to treat its territory in this way! The department sent in two capable aircraft when the situation had reached the point at which the fishermen themselves were threatening to take up arms to assert their rights. What a response to a threat of the kind we have been facing!

The minister was warned what was likely to happen. Members on this side of the House have made numerous recommendations and I shall repeat some of them today. We have asked that Canada take immediate steps to convene a conference in lieu of a Law of the Sea conference—the next to take place two years from now. We have urged that Canada convene a conference on marine resources in order that the nations of the world involved in the fishing industry might sit around a table and talk about conservation and management as a first step. This should have been done in 1959 following the Law of the Sea Conference at Geneva. Canada was given the right to ask the nations of the world to attend a conference to discuss this subject and if after six months they refused to agree on conservation measures, then Canada could take unilateral action. This was never done.

We have asked that the Canadian government impose a 12-mile limit right around the coast of Newfoundland and the coast of Canada. We have asked that the Canadian government enforce the laws which it has had on the books since 1964 and which have been brought forward under various guises since then. We have asked the government to take the question of our sovereignty over