

Private Members' Business

A report released in 1991 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations underlined in eloquent terms the dimension of the problem of overfishing by distant water fishing fleets.

The United Nations General Assembly took up this issue for the first time in 1989 when in response to the problem of overfishing in the northwest Atlantic outside Canada's 200-mile zone it expressed concern regarding the use of fishing methods and practices on the high seas that can have an adverse impact on the conservation and management of the living resources of the marine environment. The concerns were elaborated on by the General Assembly in a resolution it adopted in 1990.

Canada and other like-minded countries built on these resolutions at the last session of the General Assembly. As a result of those efforts the General Assembly adopted a very significant resolution.

It is against this background of developing international concern with respect to the problem caused by overfishing Canada launched its legal initiative to resolve the problem of overfishing on the high seas.

The Canadian initiative sought to develop specific principles and measures consistent with the Law of the Sea Convention with a view to giving full implementation to the provisions of the Law of the Sea Convention, strengthening regional organizations and ensuring the recognition of special interest of coastal states with respect to straddling stocks. This would provide for an effective legal regime governing activities of the high seas.

The first steps in the elaboration of the principles and measures were taken at a conference held in St. John's, Newfoundland in September 1990.

The conference recognized the need for such measures and agreed on a set of conclusions reflecting an increasingly shared view of how the rules of international law should be interpreted and applied. This document was further developed at a meeting of Latin American states, New Zealand and Canada in May in Santiago, Chile. Hence, it is referred to as the Santiago paper or the Santiago document which was put forward earlier this year in a series of conferences.

The first was the International Conference on Responsible Fishing held in Cancun, Mexico in May. Of course, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans led the

Canadian delegation at that conference at which 66 participants at the conference declared:

First, that states should co-operate on bilateral, regional and multinational levels to establish, reinforce and implement effective means and mechanisms to ensure responsible fishing on the high seas in accordance with relevant provisions of the Law of the Sea;

Second, that the freedom of states to fish on the high seas must be balanced with the obligation to co-operate with other states to ensure conservation and rational management of the living resources in accordance with relevant provisions of the Law of the Sea; and

Third, that states should take effective action consistent with international law to deter reflagging of vessels as a means of avoiding compliance with applicable conservation and management rules for fishing activities on the high seas.

It is interesting to note following that, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans visited Panama and got the agreement of that government to discourage reflagging and the same proposal has now been made to Honduras, another country where there has been some progress.

I see I am getting the eye, Madam Speaker. I thought I had a couple of more minutes.

I will conclude by saying that all this led to the tremendously significant development at Rio. Early this fall Canada will be calling a conference of interested nations to come forward to St. John's, Newfoundland, to look ahead for that UN conference we hope will come early in 1993. We hope that will lead to the resolution of the problem and the establishment of a proper regime for the management of transboundary stocks on the basis of sustainable development.

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[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bills without any modification: Bill C-33, an act respecting the use of foreign ships and non-duty paid ships in the coasting trade; Bill C-82, an act to amend the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act and the National Housing Act and to amend another act in consequence thereof; Bill C-7, an act respecting the status of the artist and professional relations be-