

Supply—Fisheries

The events that have been transpiring in respect of our negotiations on north Pacific fisheries, the events that have been transpiring in respect of this complete about face, which is all I can call it in light of the Prime Minister's words, in the intentions of the government regarding the establishment of base lines and a territorial sea, can only lead one, after a lapse of this time, to ask why. Is it only because of a complete lack of interest on the part of the government regarding this question?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Certainly not.

Mr. Barnett: Is there something more sinister involved than a lack of interest? Is this part of a deliberate deal by the government to sell out Canada's potential fisheries resources?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Certainly not.

Mr. Barnett: Is this part of a deal to sell out the wealth of the two oceans? Is this part of some broader deal? If the Minister of National Defence were here I would ask him if this were part of some deal involving defence commitments.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Certainly not.

Mr. Barnett: I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether this is mixed up somehow with our negotiations on the Canada-U.S. auto trade package.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Certainly not.

Mr. Barnett: I should like to ask the Minister of Trade and Commerce whether this refusal on the part of the government as a whole to do something along the lines the Prime Minister suggested in 1963, and again in the election campaign that preceded that time, is part of some kind of deal. If it is, it is not without precedent in the history of this country.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs may recall that when the bill on the territorial sea was before the committee I referred to some of the old treaties between Great Britain and the United States. In many of these treaties this fisheries picture was treated as part of a package deal. The reason the United States now has these lop-sided treaty rights and historic rights is that years ago, in some of these package deals, the interests of Canadian fisheries were ignored. The negotiating authorities did not properly recognize the potential wealth which we might in Canada enjoy as a result of our geographic relationship to the rich producing areas of the

oceans. The interests of Canadian fisheries were shoved aside because of some other matters that apparently were considered more important.

This was probably the result of Britain's strategic commitments in those days on the continent of Europe. I hope the fact that we are now a member of the NATO partnership does not mean our government is passing by our real interests in this economic field because of some strategic commitment in Europe.

Mr. Chairman, this is the kind of question this government should answer before we pass those fisheries estimates. Perhaps it is not the kind of question that the Minister of Fisheries alone can answer. As far as I am concerned, I share the admiration of the minister for the kind of Canadians we have manning and operating our fisheries department, and for the kind of scientists we have who are attempting to enlarge the field of knowledge which will enable us to conserve, protect and extend our resources in the salmon spawning streams of British Columbia.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Unless there is some real recognition of the importance of this industry by people like the Minister of Industry and the government as a whole, we shall have to begin asking ourselves whether it is worth while spending even these few paltry millions of dollars a year that are in the fisheries estimates to develop, conserve and expand salmon production so it can disappear in the high seas of the North Pacific.

These are the kind of questions to which we need answers but to which answers have not yet been given. I do not know that there is much more I can add, Mr. Chairman, to what I have said on this point. In conclusion I wish to say, as I said last night, that this business of putting off consideration of the estimates and of the future of the fisheries resources of Canada to the eleventh and the dying hour of our consideration of estimates is just not good enough. There should be ample time, not only for an opposition member who happens to come from an area where fisheries are important to contribute to this discussion, but there should be an opportunity for members from the province of Newfoundland to have their day in court.

These hon. members should not feel constrained by the whip of the government house leader to remain silent when we are discussing important matters of this kind. It is perhaps unfortunate, if this is the way in