

Continental Shelf Boundary

resume, must also remain as classified or confidential, in order to avoid prejudicing the Canadian position.

It is therefore in the interests of maintaining Canada's objectives in the settlement of this issue that such documents remain undisclosed. Disclosure would have a counter-productive effect on the conduct of external relations both with respect to the immediate matter of concern and Canada's position in other sensitive areas, and on related Law of the Sea issues as stated in motions Nos. 71, 72, 73 and 74 standing in the hon. member's name.

As to the more legal and procedural aspect of documents, the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) already described the framework as to when this tool of parliamentarians should and should not be used. I will simply refer my colleague opposite to the guidelines on motions for the production of papers, applicable in the case of the present motion, which were tabled by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) on March 15, 1973, when he was president of the privy council. Those guidelines established criteria to be applied—

[Translation]

—to determine when some official documents or papers of the government would be exempted from production.

When he tabled those guidelines, the hon. Mr. MacEachen said, and I quote him in closing:

[English]

We believe that members of parliament require factual information about the operation of the government in order that they may carry out their parliamentary duties. That statement is included in the general principle. We are also aware that the desire to make available as much information as possible must be balanced against effective public administration, protection of the security of the state and rights to privacy. It is always a delicate matter of judgment to balance the desire to make information available with the effective administration of the government, security of the state and other considerations.

I will not review the judgment of my colleague. I merely observed at the beginning of my reply to him that he made a beautiful speech on both Newfoundland and the Law of the Sea Conference, but unfortunately I shall have to ask him to withdraw his motion for the production of papers.

Mr. George Baker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment and Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very brief in dealing with the fisheries aspect of the motion. Noting his suggestion at the end of his speech that Canada or Newfoundland take measures for the acquisition of the territory of St. Pierre and Miquelon I can only conclude—and I am sure Newfoundlanders would conclude—that on the one hand the hon. gentleman is out to destroy the great tradition of rum running and, on the other, is in favour of possible instant bilingualism on the south coast of Newfoundland. That appears to be a Liberal policy.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You mean the rum running?

Mr. Baker (Gander-Twillingate): If you look at our maps and the history of the battles between the French and the English in Newfoundland you will notice that the territory of St. Pierre and Miquelon did not come under the control of Newfoundland. It seems somewhat unusual to have two small islands off the south coast of Newfoundland in which the people speak exclusively French—and

[Miss Bégin.]

Parisian French I am told. In fact some universities send their students down there for the summer months. I do not know why they do not send them to Montreal.

The hon. member who introduced the motion is absolutely correct that a problem exists with respect to the proposed 200-mile limit in the negotiations presently being conducted at the Law of the Sea Conference.

Negotiations between Canada and France with regard to the delineation of the continental shelf around the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon were suspended indefinitely in 1970, and have not been resumed.

Exclusive fishing zones were established off Canada's coasts in 1971, by the creation of fisheries' closing lines following amendments, in 1970, to the Territorial Seas and Fishing Zones Act and to the regulations made under the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act.

Bilateral phasing out agreements were concluded with those countries that had been previously fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, as well as within the 12-mile territorial sea established by the 1970 amendments.

During the phasing out negotiations with France which were signed on March 27, 1972, a line was adopted that "determines the limit of the territorial waters of Canada and the zones submitted to the fishery jurisdiction of France". The line only runs along the north and east coasts of the islands and does not encircle them.

● (1740)

The phasing out agreement also established the rights of Canadian and French vessels on either side of the line; coastal boats may continue to fish in areas where they have traditionally fished. As for larger vessels, up to a maximum of ten French trawlers, maximum length 50 metres and registered in St. Pierre and Miquelon, are permitted to fish along the Canadian coast and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence on an equal basis with Canadian trawlers, Canadian trawlers registered in Atlantic ports receiving reciprocal treatment off St. Pierre and Miquelon. That agreement is in existence today. The 1972 agreement provides for a general right of French nationals to continue to fish in any extended zone of Canadian fisheries jurisdiction off the Atlantic coast, with reciprocal rights for Canadian nationals off St. Pierre and Miquelon.

The European Economic Community is in the process of determining a common fisheries policy and the effect of this on the status of the waters off St. Pierre and Miquelon with respect to other community members is not clear. There are reports that the islands' status with respect to France may be changed from that of a territory to that of a department. The effect of this on any EEC common fisheries policy is also uncertain.

In conclusion may I say that officials of the Departments of External Affairs and Environment are keeping in close touch with developments with a view to determining an appropriate time for resumption of bilateral discussion of the continental shelf boundary issue.

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak briefly on the motion presented by the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall).

Mr. Abbott: But the hon. member was not present to hear him speak.