

They could have taken the initiative from the suggestion of the hon. member had this motion been debated earlier. It is interesting to note the resemblance between the study completed on April 10 by the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East and the one published this week by the Science Council of Canada. If the terminology is not the same, it is at least very similar.

Canada is a member of the Geneva Convention of the Continental Shelf, 1958. Canada can claim the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil offshore extending far beyond the limits of the territorial sea. Canada can claim the resources of the sea to a depth of 200 metres. There is a difference of opinion between the federal and provincial government with regard to the rights to offshore resources. In 1965, the Supreme Court dealt with the problem of resources off the west coast. The decision of the court in December of 1967 was unanimous. It found entirely in favour of the Crown. All submerged resources lying offshore from the ordinary low water mark are Crown property.

In 1968 the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) announced that Canada should establish mineral resources administration lines to divide areas of federal and provincial jurisdiction. Areas landward were to be administered by the provinces and areas seaward to be administered by the federal government. He also stated that half the revenues accruing from mineral resources from within federally administered areas would be placed in a national pool and distributed to the provinces on a basis acceptable to them. Of course, not all the provinces agreed with this proposal. There was discussion on this subject at the recent Liberal convention. The matter is far from being settled, but is a problem which must be resolved. We should not prejudice our interest in the development, continued research and use of our marine resources. It does not matter which government has the jurisdiction because both the federal and provincial governments work toward the same end. I would not like to see the Atlantic provinces in comparison with gypped other parts of Canada.

In the interest of all Canadians, the federal government should greatly improve the marine resources program. This is pointed out by the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East in a paper which he submitted some time ago. Canada is very active in the field of oil and gas. Many companies have carried out marine geophysical surveys. Since 1966, the number of exploratory permits issued has greatly increased, particularly with respect to northern gas. This applies to both the east and west coasts. As pointed out by the mover of this motion, studies have revealed a wide range of minerals, in addition to our oil resources. This is of particular interest to the Atlantic coast region.

It is well known that in the past fishing has been the main activity off these shores. The federal and provincial governments have failed to grasp the opportunities to explore and fully develop our resources. It is understood that provinces alone cannot finance or provide the necessary machinery for full exploration and development of our marine resources. Only the federal government can

Marine Resources Program

do the job properly. Certainly, the province of Nova Scotia cannot, by itself, do the job.

A lot of exploratory work remains to be done in the field of marine resources. It cannot be done by any one province. Many people, including members of this House, still believe that we should proceed with caution, particularly off the Atlantic coast, in view of the effect that exploration and development might have on our fisheries. Surely, there must be a point of balance. We must be able to exploit our marine resources to the fullest while still maintaining a viable fishery. I do not want to dampen the hopes of the fishermen in the Atlantic provinces, but at the same time the future does not look too promising. I believe there will always be proper conservation methods. I am glad to see the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis) in the House. He is very interested in the conservation of our fishery. In the last five years there has been evidence of depletion of some species. It is to our advantage to find other means of income for the residents of the Atlantic provinces. We should not simply ignore motions such as the one presented by the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East because of the benefits they would bring to the people living in the Atlantic area. This applies also to those living on the west coast.

I am referring to the Atlantic coast in particular because it has often been said that the Atlantic provinces cannot make it. Maybe they have not been given the chance. Perhaps everything that should be explored has not been explored in order to make these provinces viable. The reason for this motion is that the mineral resources off the coast of those provinces have not been explored fully. There is no doubt this would be of great benefit to that area. Increased research in resources other than the fishery is of prime importance at this stage.

The Science Council of Canada in their Report No. 10, the latest report, stated:

The impact of such developments as offshore petroleum exploration and exploitation, new needs in fisheries and transportation, new demands in recreation, antipollution, and climatic prediction and control requires a serious reconsideration of the place of marine science and technology in our total national picture. The time for action is now!

The motion presented by the hon. member is of great importance. It is unfortunate that this subject has not been debated more often in the past because it is of prime importance to the development and well being of many Canadians. Many departments are interested in and concerned with the proper development of marine resources; for example, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in our Arctic areas, and the Department of Fisheries and Forestry. We cannot develop our resources on the east coast to the detriment of the fisheries; safeguards can and must be provided. Increased research under the National Research Council, at universities and so on, should make this possible.

• (5:30 p.m.)

I simply want to impress upon hon. members that the motion moved by the hon. member for Dartmouth-