

The Address—Mr. MacEachen

making the twenty-ninth parliament, despite the minority situation, among Canada's most productive, and in leading this party to a commanding position in the House of Commons, is certainly a marvellous indication of his mastery of the art of politics and must be included among the peaks of Canada's parliamentary and political history.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: I regarded my work as leader of the House in the twenty-ninth parliament as very important, bringing me, as it did, in close association with members in all quarters of the House. Many people thought that moving from the job I had to my present job was an elevation. I thought the work I was doing as the government leader of the House of Commons was useful and important, and probably as useful and important as any work I have done in the past or will do in the future.

● (1550)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: However, I am not now in that role and I want to say a few words about my new responsibilities. Hon. members may know that recently I had the opportunity of attending the General Assembly of the United Nations; a reappearance, I might add, after an interval of almost 20 years. That opportunity gave me a platform from which I could express the Canadian point of view on a number of issues. It also gave me an opportunity to hold discussions with a considerable number of foreign ministers who were attending the General Assembly. I want to deal briefly with only two of these meetings, one with the Soviet foreign minister and the other with the Indian foreign minister.

My discussion with Mr. Gromyko was held in a friendly and informal atmosphere. We covered a number of multilateral and bilateral subjects. In particular, we had a most encouraging exchange of views on the question of family reunification. We agreed that the situation had improved in the past few years, and Mr. Gromyko felt that the future would bring further improvement. Indeed, his positive approach prompts me to think that a more flexible attitude on the departure of people from the Soviet Union and on the movement of people in general may be forthcoming. It would be good if this attitude were to be adopted by certain other east European countries.

My conversation with the Indian foreign minister was, not surprisingly, devoted to the proliferation of nuclear explosive devices. I deplored the Indian nuclear explosion and Mr. Singh expressed its peaceful purpose. I pointed out that we saw no distinction between peaceful and non-peaceful nuclear explosions. Mr. Singh said that India had no intention of developing nuclear weapons. The exchange did not narrow our differences, but I hope I left in the mind of the Indian foreign minister a realization of the deep concern of the Canadian people over the consequences of that explosion. I urged that India give immediate consideration to ways by which the problem for the international community could be resolved.

My brief period at the United Nations, in addition to a number of these talks, certainly brought home to me quite forcefully the nature of the global problems facing us all

[Mr. MacEachen.]

today and which the United Nations is presently tackling. One need only mention three areas of profound concern in order to underline the relevance of the United Nations and the work of its members to the present concerns of the world. The three areas, of course, are the law of the sea, the world population, and world food problems.

Let me say a word about the law of the sea conference which I attended in August with my colleagues, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson) and the Minister of State (Fisheries) (Mr. LeBlanc). Our purpose in going there was to see for ourselves what had been achieved on the many issues of vital interest to Canada that were being negotiated at the conference. I found, and I feel my colleagues did also, that great progress had been made and that the conference had begun to reshape the law of the sea on the basis of radical new concepts, many of which have been pioneered by Canada.

For nearly 300 years, the law of the sea has been founded on the simplistic concept of total freedom of the high seas, not a freedom that goes hand in hand with responsibility as in any civilized system of law but an unfettered freedom based on *laissez faire*. I believe the Caracas conference demonstrated to all the world, in unmistakable terms, that the days of this *laissez faire* law of the sea are over. The negotiations made clear that the new law of the sea will be founded on three new, radical concepts strongly supported by Canada and by its delegation and, I believe, by all parties in the House of Commons. The first such concept negotiated by Canada and Iceland, and endorsed unanimously at the 1972 Stockholm conference on the environment, is the need to manage ocean space and the particular interest of the coastal state in such management.

The second such concept, also pioneered by Canada, is that of the economic zone, extending coastal state jurisdiction out to 200 miles for the purpose of conservation of fisheries, preservation of the marine environment and ownership of the resources of the sea bed. The third such concept, also strongly supported by Canada, is that of reserving the sea bed beyond national jurisdiction for the common heritage of mankind and for purely peaceful purposes.

At the Caracas conference we saw, for the first time, evidence of the willingness not only of smaller powers but of the major nations of the world to accept these new doctrines. In more specific terms, the Caracas conference revealed, first, a widespread willingness to accept a 12-mile territorial sea, already established by Canada, although further difficult negotiations will be required concerning rights of passage through international straits; second, the majority acceptance of the concept of the economic zone; and third, the acceptance of coastal state ownership and control of the continental shelf.

Not surprisingly, there remained differences of opinion as to the precise nature and extent of these new rights, but it is clear at least that under the 200-mile economic zone concept the overwhelming majority of states support the principles of coastal state exclusive management and preferential fishing rights of coastal stocks, guaranteeing to Canada's fishermen, for example, that they will be able to keep all they can catch. I must say that the highly migratory and anadromous species remain sources of great dif-