

Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones

law in this field, and they reserved their position for the future. It did not follow that if the resolution did not carry, as was the case, they would still support the concept that this bill expresses, as a matter of fact. This is something that must be fully realized. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs rightly pointed out when quoting the statement of the Prime Minister of last June 4, the President of the United States stated specifically that they reserved their position on this matter. Any notion that, because the United States and some other countries supported the Canadian position in 1960, their position is still the same, is not valid. As far as any possible reaction arising out of this action on the part of the Canadian government is concerned, I think some people are lulled into a sense of false security by the statement that the United States has to buy our fish, the same as we have to sell it to them.

In this context, Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind hon. members that we export at least two thirds, in value, of our catch to the countries of the world, and a great percentage of that catch goes to the United States. I am not suggesting that the ministers responsible have this notion, but the United States have other places from which they can buy fish, if they so choose. If they had a long term contract with other countries, those other countries could even extend their fishing fleets for the very purpose of supplying the United States market, if that unfortunate situation should come about. All I am saying is that I hope there will be no reaction of this sort from any country which is affected by the action we are taking; but we must not fail to realize that this is a possibility which must be guarded against in our negotiations.

There are, as I have said, certain categories to the recommendations made by the fisheries council; and the minister has said that roughly this is what the bill is trying to achieve. However, I want to say categorically that the party for which I am speaking at the moment supports the objectives in mind—I want this to be perfectly clear—provided, of course, they can be achieved by negotiation without an overriding liability.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is precisely our position.

Mr. MacLean (Queens): I believe this has been the responsible position of the Liberal party for a number of years, although it is not, of course, my place to speak for them. For this reason I regret most strongly the

[Mr. MacLean (Queens).]

statements which were made during the last election campaign. I had better not be specific because I am speaking from memory, but statements were made to the effect that if the present government came to power they would very quickly declare unilaterally an exclusive fishing zone up to 12 miles, regardless of what happens. Let the chips fall where they may; it was perfectly simple. They said that the reason this was not done sooner was because the government of the day was not acting rapidly and resolutely enough.

I have tried to be fair in this connection, Mr. Speaker, but that was a statement which was completely invalid and should never have been made. We now have the commitment made by the present government that within a very short time of their coming into office they would declare a 12 mile exclusive fishing zone. The Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) on June 4 of last year made a statement in this regard on behalf of the government. He said that by the middle of May this year this legislation would be in effect and that this action would have been taken. I think that if one reads the fine print carefully he would discover that the Prime Minister may have created an escape hatch or two. The bravado-like statements made before the election have been soft pedalled a little and a note of caution introduced. Nevertheless the statement was made that a 12 mile exclusive fishing zone would be in effect by the middle of May 1964.

I think that if this bill were bringing this about we would have nearly reached that objective; but the trouble is that the fisheries council recommended that certain bodies of water, which the Secretary of State for External Affairs mentioned, should be proclaimed Canadian national waters, and with this I agree. The bodies of water which come to my mind are the gulf of St. Lawrence, the strait of Belle Isle, bay of Fundy, Hecate strait, Dixon entrance and Queen Charlotte sound.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): And Hudson bay.

Mr. MacLean (Queens): Yes, Hudson bay; but I believe Hudson bay is in a somewhat different position in that we have already declared it to be a national water. With this objective I concur, but I think the minister will agree with me that we have the power under the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act to take this action by order in council. I have no objection to restating the requirements in this bill especially if it will strengthen the hand of the government in its negotiations with other countries. I am perfectly willing