

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

passed by the legislature of the state of Massachusetts extending the fisheries jurisdiction of that state to 200 miles or 100 fathoms, in other words, to take in their continental shelf. The minister replied, as reported at page 9872 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, I was not aware of it. I will certainly make inquiries to see what has really happened and look at the implication for Canada.

On the following day, Friday November 26, I directed a similar question to the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) and received the following reply at page 9918 of *Hansard*:

I have made inquiries, Mr. Speaker, but I have not yet seen this legislation. It would seem to me to be ridiculous. There could be no possible parallel in Canada. If the hon. member is suggesting that Newfoundland alone declare a 200-mile limit, then I think he should talk to the government of that province.

Mr. Speaker, I was alarmed, to say the least, to learn that the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the minister charged by Parliament with the responsibility of looking after our foreign interests, would not be aware of a bill passed in the Massachusetts legislature and held to be constitutional by the Supreme Court of that state, extending their jurisdiction up to 200 miles or taking in effective jurisdiction of the continental shelf on that eastern seaboard of the United States.

It is even more alarming when we learn that our Minister of Fisheries, who is charged with the responsibility of looking after the interests of our fishing industry, would suggest in reply to a question in this House that he had not seen this act of the legislature of Massachusetts which was passed on November 8, ratified by the governor of the state on November 16 and subsequently upheld by the courts of that state as constitutional. The action taken by Massachusetts flowed from a meeting of the governors of the New England states which took place last summer, at which they adopted the following resolution:

New England governors resolve to urge extending limit to 200 miles—

Whereas, the virtual extinction of New England's offshore fisheries resources by foreign factory vessels is a clear and present danger to the region's commercial fishing industry; and

Whereas, the continued exploitation of this irreplaceable natural resource threatens the stability of the region's marine environment; and

Whereas, the need for intelligent management of New England's marine resources requires the extension of jurisdiction over living marine resources beyond the present 12-mile limit;

Now therefore be it resolved that the New England Governors' Conference hereby urges the New England congressional delegation and the executive branch of the federal government to lend their full support to passage of emergency legislation which would extend fisheries jurisdiction 200 miles from our nation's shoreline or to the one hundred fathom curve. We are convinced this policy is essential to both the health of our regional maritime economy and our nation's ecological balance.

That resolution was passed by the governors of the New England states in July or August of this year and was followed by an act of the legislature of the state of Massachusetts aimed primarily at bringing pressure to bear on the government of the United States to act to protect the fisheries of the New England states. Mr. Speaker, the commercial fishing industry is much more important to the provinces of Atlantic Canada than it is, I say with respect, to the New England states of the United States, yet no similar action has been taken in our country.

No action has been taken notwithstanding repeated urgings in this House by hon. members, myself included, and notwithstanding the formation of a special committee of the fishing industry called the Save our Fishery Association which has been formed by participating members from the Atlantic provinces and the province of Quebec. Its aim is to bring pressure to bear on the federal government to act and to protect this vital Canadian resource which has been threatened as a result of overexploitation by the foreign fishing fleets that frequent our shores.

One of the ten points in the program put forward by the Save our Fishery Association states that they would be applying maximum pressure to have the federal government clarify its position on continental shelf control and have controls implemented before the end of 1973. If these steps are not taken, said Mr. Etchegary, chairman of the Save our Fishery Association, in the near future we will have no inshore fishery in Canada.

• (10:00 p.m.)

This is cause for much concern in my province of Newfoundland where thousands of people directly and indirectly depend on the fishing industry for their livelihood. This important industry is threatened with extinction because we as a nation have been unable to take the necessary steps to protect it. This industry is vitally important to the Atlantic provinces of Canada and to the province of Quebec. It is obvious that unilateral action must be taken by Canada. The precedent is there. We now have jurisdiction over the resources underneath our continental shelf, in other words, over the oil resources and so on.

It follows that we should have the same jurisdiction over resources above our continental shelf. Those resources are there. We are exploiting them now. Those resources are providing many jobs for Canadians and taxes for the economy. The industry is very important in the Canadian economy yet, Mr. Speaker, we do not seem to be able to translate this concept into government policy. The Secretary of State for External Affairs does not seem to be interested enough in the importance of this issue to obtain the necessary bilateral agreements with the countries that exploit our fisheries and to take the necessary unilateral action to declare sovereignty over our continental shelf in order to protect our fishing industry.

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, despite all the static raised in this House regarding a certain bill passed by the Massachusetts legislature, one wonders what there was to be excited about for that bill went completely unnoticed in the Boston newspapers. I took the bother of checking both the *Globe* and the *Herald*, and the bill in question did not receive so much as a mention.

The fact of the matter may be that our friendly American neighbours may finally be waking up to the serious threat of the depletion of our oceanic resources. Canada has been leading in this field for a number of years. We have taken positive action. We have already acted positively to curb this threat and we will continue to lead in this area at every meeting, at every domestic conference and at every international conference.