

Supply—Fisheries

zone and the minister's recent visit to Washington, that the *Globe and Mail* of February 21, 1966, reports Mr. Martin as saying he made some progress on the problem of Canada's 12 mile fishing limit with adjacent United States waters. I do not know whether or not it is fair to judge the relative importance which the minister attaches to certain subjects in his mind by the length of the statements he makes about them, but if this is an illustration of how important this matter is in the minister's mind, then I would suggest it is a very long way down on the totem pole.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Mr. Martin (Essex East): May I assure my hon. friend that this question is a matter of great importance, and I share his view of that importance.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Chairman, I know we can always enjoy the words of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but I am much more concerned at the moment to have some more tangible evidence of his interest than has been given to this house in response to questions.

However, Mr. Chairman, just to get on with this matter of the 12 mile fishing limit, I should like to draw the committee's attention to a brief which was submitted on January 28, 1963 by the Fisheries Council of Canada in which they set forth their conclusion. It reads in part as follows:

Action by the Government of Canada is required to:

1. declare certain bodies of water as Canadian national waters,—

I should like the minister to note the priority given to that statement. Then, I continue:

2. establish a straight base line to enclose the national waters,

3. proclaim an exclusive fishing zone to seaward of the base line,—

Then, the Council talks about recognizing and negotiating historic treaty fishing rights. They state:

5. make a unilateral declaration with regard to the aforesaid decisions, and

6. enforce the above progressive steps.

That was in January of 1963. On June 4, 1963 the Prime Minister made a statement in this house on motions in which he said:

In the light of the failure of efforts to bring about an agreement on the breadth of the territorial sea and the contiguous fishing zone, the government has decided, after careful deliberation, that the time has come to take firm action to protect

[Mr. Barnett.]

Canada's fishing industry. It is well known that foreign fishing operations off Canada's east coast, which have increased enormously over the past five years, are not only depleting our offshore fisheries resources but are posing other problems. There are indications also that Canada's west coast fisheries may soon be threatened.

Some events that have occurred since 1963 confirm the statement made by the Prime Minister at that time.

A little later in his statement, the Prime Minister said:

With these considerations in mind the Canadian government has decided to establish a 12 mile exclusive fisheries zone along the whole of Canada's coast line as of mid-May, 1964, and to implement the straight base line system at the same time as the basis from which Canada's territorial sea and exclusive fisheries zone shall be measured.

That was on June 4, 1963. The Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act was assented to on July 16, 1964, somewhat over a year later, and was proclaimed on July 23 of that year. I should like to ask why it is that the government, has not fulfilled, either in that bill or up until this day, the statement the Prime Minister made on June 4, 1963, in which he said:

—and to implement the straight base line system at the same time as the basis from which Canada's territorial sea and exclusive fisheries zone shall be measured.

I responded to the Prime Minister's statement at that time and said:

—we welcome the announcement made by the Prime Minister.

We are, of course, concerned even more with the details of the manner in which the government intends to work out this proposal and what its end result will be—

I suggest that my hedging of the commendation at that time was very well founded, in view of events which have taken place since then.

We still have nothing more from the Secretary of State for External Affairs than the statement he made in Washington on February 20 or 21 that some progress had been made on the problem of Canada's 12 mile fishing limit with adjacent United States waters. I understood that to mean some progress on the question of establishing straight base lines.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is right.

Mr. Barnett: But on June 4, 1963 the Prime Minister informed this house that the government would establish these straight base lines at the same time they established a 12 mile territorial fishing zone. Today is March 9, 1966 and this has not yet been done.