

Supply

When this minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs say that they are doing everything they can, all we can say to them is: "That is hogwash. That is nonsense. We cannot believe you, because you know what the steps are. You know what your rights are. You know what the opportunities are, and you are not taking them."

If we were to sign and ratify the Law of the Sea, we could clearly establish the need to use it to provide a clear and unmistakable authority to provide for the conservation of the fishing stock beyond the 200-mile zone. That is a clear and obvious alternative for Canada to exercise under the rubric of international law.

For the sake of me, when there are such crucial resources at stake, I cannot understand why this minister and his government is so negligent in its response.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question, or perhaps two questions.

First, the hon. member refers to the estimates. I do not know what item appears in the estimates for public relations spending, et cetera in connection with this matter but I can assure him that I am making provision for the year 1992-93 for the spending of many times \$100,000 in connection with public relations campaigns to get on our side environmentalists and others in connection with this issue.

There will be more than adequate funding available for anything we need to do in the way of promoting the campaign to confirm and establish what the facts are with respect to this overfishing outside the 200-mile Canadian economic zone, hopefully to get the nations of the world onside and ready if we have to take some kind of action such as the motion proposes, ready to be supportive of that action.

I would like to ask the former minister this. He referred to the Arctic pollution regulation or the action taken some 20 years ago in the Arctic. He must surely realize and recognize that it was an entirely different situation in connection with the Arctic. The action taken was not recognized and approved by the rest of the world.

By now, of course, it may well have been. The only party that had any active interest in the area at all was the United States. While I would have to do some research on this to get the exact facts, it certainly was not supportive of our action and I am sure protested it. Because we were taking action in an area that other nations were not occupying and a region that they could not get to, we had a good chance of some success with respect to that unilateral act.

A unilateral act taken along the lines of what is proposed in this resolution are surely quite different. It would be our extending our jurisdiction in connection with fishing matters, the management of fisheries out beyond 200 miles and in fact out to about 280 miles to the nose and tail of the banks in an area where many other countries are, at present, fishing and exercising high sea fishing rights so that there would be an immediate clash between our action and their exercising what they think are their rights under international law.

We would immediately have conflict and confrontation with at least five, six or seven other nations, including the European Community, which is a very powerful combination of 12 other countries.

• (1540)

Surely the member will admit that these are two different fact situations. If we are to even contemplate taking the kind of action that the resolution proposes, we have to set the stage so that a considerable part of the world and other nation states are ready to say: "Yes, this is an action that is justified. This particular state took every conceivable step it could to have this resolved and now it has taken a unilateral act".

It is this unilateral act that the rest of the world should be prepared to accept. That is the position we have to get ourselves in. Surely he will admit the fact situations are quite different.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I will take both those serious questions and respond in like time.

First I would say to the minister I am more than pleased to hear that he will take up the slack that his colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, has allowed to develop. I want to say to the minister in return, is his own department of fisheries prepared to pick up the major subtraction of legal fees, the cancella-