

Adjournment Debate

the 200-mile limit." I therefore wish to ask the parliamentary secretary whether Mr. Kissinger was asked about his or the U.S. President's position in regard to this bill.

It is also difficult for me to reconcile; the growing numbers of nations that are declaring 200-mile fishing limits unilaterally, nations like Mexico, Iceland, Norway and, indeed, the United States, and I understand that this action is being taken because of their growing dissatisfaction with the pace at which the Law of the Sea negotiations are progressing. If all is well, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) keeps assuring us, then why have these nations declared their intentions since the last Law of the Sea Conference?

It is worth while noting the concern expressed at the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council deliberations on the Law of the Sea when the frightening revelation came forth from Mr. Cabot Martin, a dedicated student of ocean law, that any action by Canada would depend on United States initiatives. It was even more alarming to note that Mr. Martin, who has taken part in Law of the Sea Conferences, was informed by his American counterparts that the President of the United States supports the bill as presented to the House and Senate, as long as it did not take effect until January, 1977, which means that Canada would not declare if she was so disposed until after that date.

On a recent visit to the United States with a parliamentary delegation, discussions revealed that indeed such was the case, and I think that members opposite who attended will confirm that this was so. Let's look also at some of the statements made by international experts, Mr. Speaker. First, I quote from Mr. Jean Angrand, a specialist in international law, taken from an issue of *International Perspective*:

The recent conferences at Geneva and Caracas have produced no new solutions; in fact, the situation has become more complicated for several reasons, the main ones arising from the dissimilar positions taken by the participants and from the interaction of political claims and economic demands.

And I quote from a paper by Barry Duzan in the same publication, a gentleman who is preparing a book-length study on the Law of the Sea negotiations. One comment he made on one of the committees, committee II, is as follows:

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In committee II dealing with nearly all the traditional law of the sea terms, developments bordered on the disastrous. Because of its extensive, complex and controversial agenda, this committee needed a significant move forward, a move which did not occur and indeed scarcely any progress was made. The committee spent two fruitless weeks reviewing the work of the Caracas session and did not even begin to meet until the last two weeks of the session.

Finally, this comment by the same expert:

The single negotiating texts did not commit anybody to anything, but it is hoped that they would attract sufficient support to act as a focus for subsequent negotiations, and thereby release delegates from the ruts of their oft repeated preferences as expressed in the numerous alternative articles in existing texts.

These were not made public until the last few minutes of the session, the idea being to avoid controversy, to give delegates time to reflect on the single texts outside the

pressure of the conference and to prepare their responses as a basis for the next session. A welcome side effect was their value as a visible product to justify the Geneva session. So I find it very difficult to believe the minister of external affairs, who all during the summer recess kept proclaiming across the country, and particularly in the maritimes, that all was well, that progress was being made, and that Canada was leading the conference toward victory.

I have more faith in what the fisheries minister is doing in his bilateral negotiations with those countries that are willing to co-operate on surveillance and quotas. But I deplore that I am expected to believe that solutions are just around the corner and that by continuing negotiating we will achieve our aims. It is obvious that this is going to take many more conferences. There is only one answer to the problem until international agreement is reached, and I repeat that is that Canada must take unilateral action immediately to protect our fish stocks by declaring a 200 mile fisheries zone before we are negotiated right out of the fishing industry. If the United States deems it important enough, why do we continue to procrastinate? Surely, then, we can continue to negotiate on offshore resources, sea passage, and the other main objectives to proclaim management and control out to our continental shelf, and I ask the minister to address himself to such action as I suggest.

Miss Monique Bégin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all I should like to thank my hon. colleague opposite for his very kind words regarding my recent appointment to this new responsibility. I also take it for granted that he will excuse my deficient knowledge of the English language, my lack of mastery of the law of the sea and the technical language that goes with such an important issue, one that is highly specialized. Since I have been in this House I have come to realize very deeply his concern, and that of his colleagues and my colleagues who represent fishing communities and fishing interests—in other words, Canadian interests—for this very acute problem. I have had the opportunity of being able to observe some of the lengthy deliberations that took place at the deliberations in New York during the penultimate session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

To relate my remarks more directly to the hon. member's present question, I might say that the question of the extension of fisheries jurisdiction to 200 miles was discussed on the occasion of Dr. Kissinger's visit to Ottawa. I am here referring to the discussions that took place between the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) and other Canadian ministers and the United States Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger. I cannot speak here about the conversations that took place between the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and Dr. Kissinger; I should like to make that quite clear.

The hon. member will understand that I wish my minister had the occasion to answer this question for himself in the House, both because he would be far more aware of the exact tone of the deliberations and because I feel it would have been courteous on my part to let him do so. Unfortu-