

Mr. CARTER: Is not it a fact, Mr. Chairman, that for many years we were proceeding on the theory put forth by the scientists that the fisheries were inexhaustible? The experience of George's bank shows that is not so; as a result of concentration of fishing there could be depletion, and that could apply to George's bank, and could apply to other banks.

Mr. CROUSE: Mr. Chairman, in relation to that point: the facts are that today the fishing on George's bank, which Mr. Carter says is depleted, they are catching comparable amounts of cod and haddock on George's bank to what we are catching on the banks we have off Nova Scotia.

I submit for this committee's consideration that when the fishing becomes depleted on any bank it is not so much due to over-fishing as to natural causes.

Coming back to your point of trawling the fish on the high seas or on the Grand Banks off Newfoundland. If you look at a picture of the type of Russian trawler, which I would say would approximate a 10,000 ton ship, by what reasoning can this commission—God did not put the Atlantic ocean out there for Canada, it is for all nations of the world, and they are using it. By what reason can we condemn the use of any net?

Mr. CARTER: Mr. Crouse has got completely off the beam, Mr. Chairman. We are talking about the international commission, members of twelve nations who have got together to discuss this problem; we are not talking about any one country or taking advantage of another, this is a matter which confronts all countries and which concerns the commission.

Mr. CROUSE: Mr. Chairman, I may be off the beam as Mr. Carter says but I will bring him back to my original point: the statement he made was a bit off the beam, when he said fishing was depleted on George's bank. It is not depleted, they are catching comparable quantities of fish there today to other banks, and they have increased the fish take on George's bank by removing enormous amounts of shell-fish. The amount of scallops caught on George's bank has increased tremendously.

It is an area where currents from the north and from the gulf stream, I believe, converge and there are large amounts of plankton and food on which fish can feed. If those currents change you have a decrease in fishing, and then the following year it increases again.

There is no way in which you can actually tie that in with the over-fishing or lack of it.

Mr. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, may I ask this last question?

If there was no over-fishing on George's bank, if there were no signs of depletion, why was the size of the mesh increased?

Mr. CLARK: The size of the mesh was increased because damage was being done to the small, immature fish, which was a complete waste. These small fish were not allowed to escape the net and grow and later be available to the fishery.

I would like to make a point, Mr. Chairman. I think Mr. Carter said there were statements made by scientists in the past that the stocks of fish were inexhaustible.

Mr. CARTER: Yes.

Mr. CLARK: I do not recall the statements. They may have been made, but not to my knowledge. I do not think that any scientists would say that if you go out and kill all the fish the stocks would be inexhaustible. If the statement was made I do not think it was made in that sense.

I think it is true that you can fish a stock down to the point where it is uneconomical to continue fishing, but to say the stocks could not be completely exhausted I do not think is quite correct.