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I discussed this situation last Friday night with the premier of one of the maritime provinces. He was completely unaware of the results and recommendations of this \$23 million, 1986 royal commission, a commission that in the course of its work had caused 550 seals to be opened up so the contents of their stomachs could be examined. In four of them they found cod so that, in fact, less than 1 per cent of these seals were consuming cod.

Certainly the harp seals in the northwest Atlantic eat a wide variety of marine organisms, including fish, shrimps, other crustaceans and squid. The member from British Columbia was saying that whatever they are eating, they are eating something that is part of the food chain and therefore they are part of the problem. He put it in terms of logic. The same logic could also be used to say that if it is true the seals are eating all of the cod and the cod-related fish in the food chain and the cod is gone, then also the seals must be going. At the same time he is saying the seal population is increasing. We would need a few years to see the trends on this, but if what he is saying is to be treated logically, then we can be witnessing a massive depletion of the seal population in the next couple of years, as they will be starving to death. It will not be the result of any government organized call.

The question about the population is an important one because the minister also mentioned it. My research and looking at these documents show that the Canadian government's own surveys indicate that the harp seal population has not exploded since the European import ban in 1983. There has been really no marked increase between 1978 and 1990 and claims that the number has gone from two million to I think recently the number that the Newfoundland Fishermen's Association has been using of 3.3 million animals since 1983, that kind of increase is based on the unfounded assumption that the population has been growing at a constant rate. I cannot find in any of these reports that I have looked at any data to support that assumption. Certainly Canada's royal commission on seals and sealing indicated that harp seals are migratory and only overlap with the northern cod stock for a few months of the year. More than half of

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their annual diet is consumed beyond the limits of traditional Canadian fisheries in the northwest Atlantic.

To finish that point, I think that some of the recommendations that are made by this royal commission should be taken to heart by all of us, parliamentarians, government officials at the Canadian and the provincial levels because there is a wealth of good information here about the relationship and how it can be kept in balance.

I certainly believe that resource management is important. Where human intervention has upset the cycle it is important to see that a balance is maintained. On the correlation between the seal population and the fish stocks, there is a lot of information here in this royal commission report that indicates that it is too simple to say, as a number of members do and members of the public do, that the seals really are the culprit. That is using them as a scapegoat.

I just conclude on that point with this from yesterday's *Halifax Chronicle Herald*: "Canada should think long and hard before authorizing an expanded seal hunt which could trigger a ban on fish products in Europe". I think that is a serious and significant view from Atlantic Canada that should be taken to heart on this issue. I would agree with the main point that the minister of fisheries made, that this question about seals is important, but a separate issue from the core concern that is before the House of Commons right now, which is the depletion of the north Atlantic cod stock.

In conclusion, I come back to the point that we should, in addition to the other initiatives that the minister has mentioned, take this issue before the World Court. We must take new initiatives at lobbying with parliamentarians in Europe and elsewhere. Again, I do not see this as a non-confidence vote in the government.

I think that it would be helpful to the Government of Canada to have from Canadian parliamentarians a very strong statement about our feeling that the issue is so serious we should take every measure possible and leave no option unexamined or unattended in our response to the crisis that is facing the people, the ecology of the north Atlantic and indeed, on a broader basis, the whole world. This is a global resource. I agree in a sense with the whole spirit of this resolution. We, as one of the