

many years have had breadths of the territorial sea off their countries far more than three miles. There are countries with a four-mile territorial sea; there are several with a six-mile territorial sea and there is one with a nine-mile territorial sea--that is Mexico--and the Soviet Union has a 12-mile territorial sea. Some go beyond that, even to the extent of 200 miles. This great variety of claims on the breadth of the territorial sea indicates that there is no such thing as uniformity. Generally speaking, the maritime powers have insisted on and recognized only three miles, even though there has not been any direct challenge to the countries that have territorial seas of different widths. As a matter of interest, the U.S.S.R. has a territorial sea of 12 miles, going back to the days of the Czars and it is not likely that anyone is going to challenge anything that has been in existence for over 50 years.

Having given this background, I think it is now fitting for me to point out that this problem was so complex that the International Law Commission did not make any definite recommendations to this general conference of the United Nations on this matter, but simply pointed out that 12 miles in its opinion was the maximum limit that they thought should exist. Now, for some time Canada has felt that a 12-mile limit was necessary to protect our fishing interests but we have recognized that an extension of the territorial sea to 12 miles might jeopardize the proper interests of those nations and those people who want to maintain freedom of the sea and freedom for air navigation. Therefore, our dilemma was, how could we reconcile the defence interests, freedom of the seas and the freedom of the air, which really requires a very narrow territorial sea, and the needs of our people on our coasts for some priority in harvesting the fish off their shores?

It is a matter of general knowledge, Mr. Speaker, that at the present time by Canadian law we have forbidden Canadian trawlers to fish within 12 miles of our coasts, and yet, because there is no international law, the trawlers from foreign nations can come inside our 12-mile limit and do fish in waters that the Canadian people do not allow Canadian trawlers to fish in. Quite frankly, we would like to reserve those first 12 miles off our shores for the people who cannot afford the big trawlers and who would like to make a living out of this band of water that they can get to and from with their limited resources as far as capital equipment is concerned.

Now, that was the problem that we faced at this Conference, and this goes back for several months and years. The Canadian Government proposed what became known as the Canadian proposal. This was first put forward two years ago. Reduced to its simplest terms it was an attempt to reconcile the interests of defence, freedom of the seas and freedom of