

Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones

shown by the minister has not been shown by spokesmen for the party of which he is a member in the heat of election campaigns. I regret very much the attitude that was taken on many occasions by speakers on behalf of the party now in power, during not only the last campaign but the last three or four campaigns. I suppose some of these people can be excused up to a point, because in most cases they were not people who were most familiar with the problems involved.

I feel this is a very important matter not only to Canada's fishermen but to Canada as a nation. It is a problem that we must try to solve with as much of a united front as we can present to other countries when negotiating with them for what we consider to be our rights. It is, of course, an important subject, chiefly because as the world population increases, the demand on the living resources of the sea increases at an even greater rate, with the result that many countries have greatly enlarged their fishing fleets and their fishing efforts over the last few years and larger and larger fleets are operating closer and closer to our coasts as time goes by.

This bill represents the Canadian reaction, as expressed by the present government, to this state of affairs. I do not propose to review the fact that discussions have been going on with regard to this subject for a number of years. The Secretary of State for External Affairs reviewed this situation very fairly, I think, and I believe it was a matter of great regret to all Canadians interested in this matter that the proposal put forward by Canada at the 1960 Geneva conference missed being accepted by only one vote. Indeed, up to the last moment it seemed that it would be accepted, but for some reason that has never been explained, at least one country—I think in fact there were two or three—abstained from voting. What their motives or considerations were, nobody knows; but at the very last moment the proposition was lost. I think this was a great loss to international law generally, and to a reasonable development of international law as far as the living resources of the sea are concerned. Following that failure to carry the Canadian six plus six proposal—that is, the familiar six miles territorial sea, plus six miles exclusive fishing zone—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): It was then a compromise formula.

Mr. MacLean (Queens): That is correct. Following the failure to carry that proposal, the

Canadian government did not just sit on its hands, as I heard many speakers of the party of the Secretary of State for External Affairs state during the last election campaign—and I think very unfairly. I say this because I have great regard for the officials of the departments concerned, chiefly the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Fisheries, in this very difficult field. They worked hard and conscientiously, and so did the government of which I was a member; and I would doubt if as a result of the change of government there has been any appreciable change in the speed of the progress being made. I think it is fair to say that had the former government still been in power we would almost certainly be at least as far ahead as we are now—perhaps farther. I am willing to admit that the opposite could be the case. However, in both cases our objectives are the same; they are the objectives which, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs said, are expressed in a submission to the government by the fisheries council of Canada. I believe this submission is dated January, 1963. Actually the letter transmitting it to me was dated January 28.

Unfortunately the government of which I was a member was defeated in the house within a week of that date. I would just like to highlight that date, because it has been inadvertently published in the newspapers of Canada—due, I think, to a typographical error—that this submission was made in 1961. Everybody recognizes that it was actually made in 1963. I believe the fisheries council have done a great service to Canada by presenting this resolution, because by so doing they have tremendously strengthened the hand of any government in these negotiations. By making these recommendations they have at least in a measure taken, on behalf of the fishing industry of Canada, some of the responsibility for any reaction which might come from other countries as a result of our action in this field.

I hope there will be no detrimental reaction, but I think this is a possibility that we should not forget, that some countries that are friends of ours have very strong reasons for objecting to either an extension of the territorial sea or an extension of the exclusive fishing zone. Persons may be misled by the fact that these friends of ours joined with us as a compromise in the Geneva conference to support our resolution; but they joined with us only for the purpose of trying to bring order into the chaos of international