

convention in Ottawa. I would like to hear the new parliamentary secretary address himself to this, but he must be careful that he is not swallowed by it. The resolution was as follows:

That in view of the increasing importance of the fisheries to the people of Canada, particularly to the people of the coastal provinces, that there be re-established immediately a department to take charge of this area to be known as the Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources.

That is an exact quotation of the resolution passed at the 1973 Liberal party convention. I suspect the parliamentary secretary was not at that convention. However, he certainly attended the meeting of the Atlantic provinces' Liberal candidates in Halifax during the 1974 federal election campaign. They passed a similar resolution calling for a separate Department of Fisheries, claiming that the 1972 government re-organization bill had sub-merged the department and created the Department of the Environment.

Following the meeting of Atlantic provinces' Liberal candidates, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was quoted by the press as saying he supported that resolution. He made a solemn pledge to the people of the Atlantic provinces that he would in fact re-institute the Department of Fisheries. I would like the parliamentary secretary, who represents probably one of the most important fishing constituencies in Canada, to explain how he can reconcile his present role in the Liberal party with the fact that this resolution of the Liberal candidates of the Atlantic provinces has been virtually ignored by the Government of Canada.

● (1610)

The industry is going through a crisis. The very survival of the industry is at stake, as is the very survival of the economy of the Province of Newfoundland which is so heavily dependent upon the industry.

While I would be the first to congratulate the Minister of State for Fisheries and the government on their success at the ICNAF conference in Montreal in getting through that resolution which would provide for a 40 per cent reduction in the total catch of ICNAF members, as well as a corresponding increase in our own portion of the catch, I would at the same time caution the government that this is not enough. This in no way diminishes the critical need for Canada to extend its jurisdiction for the purposes of managing the control over the 200 miles economic zone as the Republic of Iceland has already done, and as the Congress of the United States has already voted to do.

I hope the minister will lead the Canadian delegation to the Law of the Sea Conference when it resumes in New York in March, and that he will carry with him the desire of the Parliament of Canada, and the desire of the people of Canada as expressed by all the premiers meeting in St. John's a few months ago, in order to preserve this vital industry, for Canada to extend its limit up to 200 miles for the purpose of conservation. Anything less than that will not succeed because we know from past experience the weakness of ICNAF.

The inherent weakness of the ICNAF treaty is, basically, the inability of member countries to live up to the commitments they have made. We have no reason to sus-

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pect that this situation will be changed in the future. We do not possess at this time the surveillance capacity to put into practice the authority we have under the ICNAF agreement to board vessels fishing off our coasts to determine whether they are living up to their quota commitment.

Canada must have the right to exclusive management. I do not mean to imply for a moment that Canada would exert its right to the exclusive harvesting of the resources. But somebody must be responsible for the management of the resource and, obviously, that somebody should be the coastal state adjoining the resource. Canada should exercise its right to management of the resource not only for ourselves, vital as the industry is for us, but for the other nations of the world, and certainly for the nations signatory to the ICNAF agreement whose vessels fish off our shores.

I know the minister will carry with him when he goes to this conference the good will of the House and of the people of Canada. I hope he will see fit to include among the Canadian delegation members of the opposition parties who could go along as observers. This would be a tangible indication to other countries at the conference that Canada stands united in this effort.

I do not intend this afternoon to outline the problems of the industry because I think they are well known to the House. I merely wish to conclude by saying that in the midst of this tremendous crisis, this life and death struggle of the industry to survive, it is a matter of considerable regret to me that we should be without the support of a separate department of fisheries in Canada. I give credit to the Minister of State for Fisheries. He is doing the best he can when one takes into consideration the handicap under which he is obliged to operate. Specifically, he does not preside over the department; he has little or no input into the management of the department's budget, and hence he is virtually powerless to discharge his responsibilities in the department toward the fishermen of Canada.

I hope the House will agree to allow this bill to be referred to the committee so that we may have a chance to call witnesses and study the impact of the proposals I have made. All the measure calls for is the creation of a position for an officer within the present Department of the Environment who would be known as the Deputy Minister of Fisheries, and whose function would obviously be to look after the operation of the fisheries and assist the Minister of State for Fisheries in this regard. I hope this bill will commend itself to the support of the House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): May I first of all thank the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) for raising this matter and giving us the chance to take part in this debate, one which is so important to us on the Atlantic coast and, indeed, to people all over the country because fisheries have become a national issue, and rightly so.

I should like to join the hon. member in congratulating my hon. friend from Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) on his appointment as parliamentary secretary. I take it this is not only an indication of the ability of my hon. friend and the esteem in which he is held, but that it is a recognition of a particular province, that is to say, the