

of these non-governmental environmental organizations.

I would suggest that maybe this quasi-government organization, the National Round Table, which I believe reports to the Minister of the Environment or the Prime Minister, should perhaps be mandated to develop the communications strategy. Maybe it could be the bridge to all of these environmental groups that sometimes have difficulty in dealing directly with government agencies.

I am not suggesting for a second that getting Greenpeace to take up this cause is going to be easy. I am not sure that we are trying hard enough. That is my point. Quite frankly, if the minister were to write a letter to all these environmental organizations and they refused to assist, it would taint the credibility of the organization. Although we have had bad experiences with them in the past on other issues, where maybe we questioned their motives, this should not stop us from asking them to address probably the most serious environmental disaster we have ever had in our country.

• (1620)

**Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to participate in this debate today. It is good that the House is taking the time to look at the problems facing the Atlantic fishery, but as was said, we have to debate the problems.

I look forward to the day when we can talk about the tremendous success in the fishing industry and how prosperous the communities are.

The motion today is about extending the jurisdiction to control of the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

Problems in the Atlantic fishing industry are not new. The people of the region have made their living from the sea for literally hundreds of years, having come from England, Scotland and Ireland. Fishermen have had to endure the dangers of nature, the dominance of merchants and isolation. Nor is the problem of overfishing new.

In the eyes of many people in Atlantic Canada the problems in the fishery are caused by two things, foreign overfishing and government inaction on the overfishing. For years fishermen, unions, plant workers and companies, all of these people, have been telling government to take firm action on foreign overfishing.

### *Supply*

When the current crisis started back in the late 1980s, the government appointed Leslie Harris of Memorial University to study the northern cod stocks and to make recommendations. In his report, Dr. Harris said that while Canada must pursue a negotiated agreement over the control of the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, I quote:

The setting of the Total Allowable Catch and other management decisions ought, in logic, to be the responsibility of a single regulatory authority which, in the instant case, should be the Canadian government.

Everybody agrees that a negotiated settlement giving Canada control of the entire Grand Banks is preferred to acting on our own. However, for a number of years the government has been pursuing this with absolutely no progress. In fact foreign overfishing on the nose and tail has increased. The government has sat idly by and watched the Spanish, Portuguese, Germans, Koreans and others taking our fish. In the formal recommendations to the report Dr. Harris said, and I quote:

That Canada should seek international agreement to permit its management of all fish stocks indigenous to the Canadian Continental Shelf, and that extend beyond the two hundred mile economic zone; and, that failing achievement of this objective, Canada should take unilateral action to acquire management rights in accordance with provisions of the Law of the Sea Convention.

The key words are "take unilateral action". However, action seems to be a foreign word to this government.

On a number of occasions my colleague from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception has outlined the historic precedent that would allow Canada to take over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. From what I understand, one of the key requirements of the government is to extend the jurisdiction which would have the ability to enforce its jurisdiction.

Just over a year ago, the Canadian government sent the navy halfway around the world to stop a madman from destroying a country. The government was defending freedom, it said. Well, what about defending Canadian fishermen? What about defending our environment?

Right now a number of fishermen from Newfoundland are preparing to go to the nose and tail to challenge foreign vessels stealing our fish. Experts in the matter from Iceland are providing advice. While it is nice to see fishermen take strong action against the foreigners, they