

*Private Members' Business*

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has said that the salmon are in good shape on the west coast, that there is no problem there. We know that the salmon on the west coast are being pirated. We know that the steelhead are being pirated and we do not have control. We do not have the control that was offered to us in the Law of the Sea Convention. One of the reasons we do not have it is that the convention has yet to be ratified. It is in our hands. We are responsible as is every other nation.

The previous speaker said that we like to talk about our three seas, about being bounded by oceans on the east, on the west and on the north. We have more oceanic coastline than any other nation in the world. It is more important to us than to any other nation. Certainly, there are problems. There are discussions that have yet to take place, agreements that have to be reached. We know that mining the seabed is one of them.

There is no reason on earth that we could not go on talking about things like that after we have ratified the treaty. That need not be the end of it. There can be changes. There can be new looks at it to improve it in many ways. That can still go on. There is some pressure on people to come to agreements earlier once we have ratified the treaty.

The Secretary-General, as another government spokesman has said, has been making progress. We know that and we appreciate the progress that has been made. For example, the United States which had been opposing the ratification, voting against it, finally abstained at the UN meeting last year. That is progress. It is sort of half way. All they have to do is make one more step and the U.S. will be ratifying the treaty. For it to ratify the treaty ahead of us would put us to shame. We have more at stake, more to lose, and more need of it, yet we are not prepared to lead the nations that need to be led to sign this treaty.

It is not just the cod on the east coast. It is not just the straddling stocks. One speaker said we had made progress with respect to the straddling stocks. The only progress we have made is that we have persuaded other nations that they too must refrain from fishing cod for a period until we can tell what will happen, until we know whether the stocks will recover in a reasonable length of time. We do not know that yet. We are still hoping. At least we are going to give the remaining survivors, to the

extent that there are survivors, an opportunity to try to recover the species. That is happening.

On the west coast the problem is not as obvious or serious yet. However, only two years ago we did not know how serious the situation was with respect to the Atlantic cod. I can recall the then Minister for International Trade, now the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, saying that he was not going to agree to a drastic reduction in quota, a reduction recommended by the experts, by Professor Harris. He was not prepared to agree to a quota of 120,000 tonnes a year because it would be hard on the people working in the industry—the fishing people, the processing people, the companies. It would be hard on all of them.

I argued at the time that we should accept short-term pain for long-term gain but his position was firm. He was not going to agree to the quota being set where the experts said it should be set. He would rather gamble on the future.

As a result of his gambling there is now a two-year moratorium on fishing cod in extensive areas and a further moratorium being considered. Now the same person, which gives me very little confidence, tells us that the west coast salmon are not in trouble.

We are going to hear more about that on Monday. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said that he would have a press conference on the west coast on Monday.

He will be talking about an inquiry that was made about the alleged disappearance of 1.2 million sockeye that came into the river but did not arrive at the spawning grounds. Nobody was supposed to be fishing them in between except by permit and a fixed number but the fish did not get to the spawning ground. We have been trying to rebuild the Stuart Lake run for 16 years and have made real progress. Those fish came into the mouth of the Fraser River but they did not get up to Stuart Lake. This is the minister who reassures us and says that everything is okay.

It is the same with the Law of the Sea Convention. We need not hurry. We can take our time. Let us keep trying to get agreement on mining the seabed.

We all know there are substantial resources there. Whether they are economic or not we do not know. We do not know how to share the proceeds or the costs. These are all issues with which we can deal after we have ratified the treaty. There is nothing so binding in it that it cannot be changed. There is nothing that cannot be