

North Pacific Fishery

coastal fisheries is one with which I am very familiar. I well remember when I was a lad 25 years ago fishing for pilchards off the west coast of Vancouver island. We were always concerned about rumours and reports that the Japanese were going to move into our territorial waters and take our pilchards, salmon, herring and halibut. It appears to me that, for the first time in history, this treaty will afford these fisheries some protection. I must say that, after all those years, I am very glad that we have finally decided to afford some protection to this very valuable asset. We have our salmon, our halibut and our herring, which are the principal fisheries resources on the Pacific coast, and they are now to be given what is considered to be the most adequate measure of protection possible under existing conditions. I would say to the parliamentary assistant I would be very happy, when this international commission is set up, if this question of the conservation of pilchards could be considered.

I recall that at one time off the west coast of Vancouver island we took some 200,000 tons of pilchards a year. Owing to the lack of international co-operation of the United States fishermen and the lack of protection given by the United States government to the pilchard fisheries off the coast of California, we find that there are no pilchard fisheries operations off our British Columbia coast at all. As a result, several million dollars' worth of fisheries products have been lost. I am glad to learn that the United States government has seen fit to put a closure on the catching of pilchards off the coast of California for a five-year period. It seems to me that this international fisheries commission which will be set up under this bill would be an effective agent to see that this fishery is brought back. I would hope that this example of international co-operation might motivate that great nation, Russia, to join us in this fisheries treaty in due course.

Like other hon. members, I am extremely happy to see that a special committee has been set up by the Department of Fisheries and the Department of External Affairs to consider the problem of our territorial waters. I realize just how important the problem of the definition of our territorial waters is, and from my experience on the committee on marine and fisheries I understand just how complicated and involved a problem it is, both from the legal aspect and from the economic aspect.

I must say that I have always felt Canada was short-changed, perhaps by the unfortunate representation we had in the early days when treaties were made on our behalf before we achieved national sovereignty.

Perhaps our interests were not as well protected as they might have been. I can also appreciate the fact that the United States feel they have a historical claim to the fishing in Hecate strait, and there are those who say we should deny them access to these waters. On the other hand, we must never forget that the United States provides the best market for our fisheries products, and the fisheries industry of Canada would be in a most unfortunate position if it were not for that market.

I feel that this treaty represents a historic advance in international relations. It provides additional protection to the great majority of our fisheries, and I believe it is worthy of the support of this house.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the parliamentary assistant speaks now on behalf of the minister, he will close the debate.

Mr. J. Watson MacNaught (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Fisheries): I feel that I should make a few remarks, Mr. Speaker, in connection with the request of the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Pearkes), the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green), and the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis), that this bill be referred to the standing committee on marine and fisheries for further consideration. If this had been the first time the convention had been before the house, I would be inclined to agree, and in fact I would agree with the request. But, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Applewhaite), as well as by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Gibson), this convention was before the house at the last session of parliament. At that time it was debated fully at the resolution stage, and was then referred to the standing committee on marine and fisheries, where 146 pages of evidence were taken.

Opportunity was given by the committee for all interested parties to make representations. Very satisfactory evidence was given before the committee, particularly that of the deputy minister of fisheries wherein he explained the terms of the treaty. Then there was satisfactory evidence by Mr. Ozere, director of legal services in the Department of Fisheries, who explained the technical aspects, and further evidence of a legal nature by Mr. Erichsen-Brown, of the legal division of the Department of External Affairs. He gave very helpful evidence on the involved and complex problem of territorial waters. Then there was evidence from a representative from British Columbia, Mr. Homer Stevens, the secretary of the united fishermen and allied workers' union. His evidence took most of one day, and he was examined and cross-