

Fisheries Act

Finally, the bill deals with fishing operations on the east coast, and it corrects an anomaly which has existed off the coast of Newfoundland ever since that province threw in its lot with the rest of Canada. Here, I refer to the fact that deep sea trawlers operating off the coast of Atlantic Canada, other than Newfoundland, were required to refrain from fishing operations until they were 12 miles from our shores, while deep sea Newfoundland trawlers could start trawler operations three miles from the coast. In other words, all our east coast fishermen are equal but some are more equal than others.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Under the changes proposed, which I agree bring uniformity to our regulations, all our deep sea fishermen in Atlantic Canada will now be treated alike. I only hope that day will not be too far distant when the 12-mile limit will apply not only to Canadians, who practice it as a conservation measure, but to the eight other countries, namely Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom and the United States, who historically and traditionally have fished within three miles of our coastline and whose operations, as of today, have not been phased out by the government. All our new regulations, and all our talk about conservation of our fisheries resources, become meaningless unless other nations such as those I have mentioned are willing to co-operate and practice conservation policies similar to those imposed upon our own nationals.

Mr. Barnett: Mr. Speaker, as the minister said when he moved second reading of this bill, it does propose some very extensive changes to our Fisheries Act. I would think it is probably the most extensive revision of the act which has taken place since 1932 and, perhaps in some ways, the bill proposes the most important change in some of its basic principles since the act was introduced in the first Parliament of Canada, as the minister said. Many of the changes, of course, just repeal some of the archaic sections of the act. So far as I have been able to study the bill, I have no quarrel with what is being done in this regard. There are certain other changes, such as those mentioned by the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse), in respect of the application of the Fisheries Act on the Atlantic coast which, so far as I am concerned, are logical changes at this time.

I believe, however, there are two really important changes proposed in this bill, and I

[Mr. Crouse.]

intend to confine my discussion at the second reading stage to these two particular aspects. The first, and perhaps least important of the two, has to do with the introduction into the Fisheries Act of specific sections in respect of jurisdiction over marine plants. These are now to be under the purview of the act and the department. Although as I believe the minister pointed out, and I well recognize, to some extent marine plants have been controlled and regulations have been applied by the department. I believe this is certainly a very interesting clause of the bill and one which indicates a recognition of the potential importance of marine plants in the industrial and commercial life of Canada. For this reason, I welcome the proposed sections which will enable proper regulation and control over the volume and method of harvesting of marine plants.

Undoubtedly, without some form of careful management some of these marine plant resources which potentially are of economic benefit to our fishermen would be depleted, and in fact mined instead of harvested. This has happened from time to time in respect of some particular species of our fish. I know that in the area of the Pacific coast with which I am familiar, there is at the present time an effort being made to promote the commercial harvesting of kelp. This is a very interesting form of plant life. I had the opportunity of discussing this particular venture with the people who are endeavouring to pioneer it. Although I do not think it will ever develop into one of British Columbia's major industries, I believe this is a very significant development and my interest is heightened by the fact that the act is being amended in this regard.

I wish to commend the minister for bringing in these proposals in respect of placing marine plants under the jurisdiction of the act. I readily understand this can be important in respect of another aspect. I commend the minister for introducing control over the algae and other marine plants, even though they may not be harvested commercially, because this is important in relation to the ecology of the waters of Canada, both inland and on our coasts.

The other major clauses of the bill to which the minister referred most extensively, as indeed did the hon. member for South Shore, have to do with the changes proposed in respect of the control of pollution. The pres-