

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### FISHERIES

#### GRAND BANKS

**Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take immediate action to extend custodial jurisdiction for northern cod over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this motion that has been in the making for a long time. I want to read the motion again. It reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should take immediate action to extend custodial jurisdiction for northern cod over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

This is a private members' motion that I put forward. It is not the first time this subject has been discussed in the House. There have been emergency debates on it. There have been opposition days and in the last four and a quarter years—I did a quick tally before I came to the House today—the subject has come up very close to 50 times one way or another.

This will be a votable motion so I would enjoin my colleagues from all sides of the House to pay attention to what we are discussing here because they are going to have to vote yea or nay on this subject.

Anybody watching this debate right now may say: "Well, why is this subject coming up at this particular point in time?" I will explain why it is coming up at this particular point in time. I came to this House 50 months ago and made a speech in which I talked the about necessity for Canada to take control of its fishing area. I talked particularly about taking control over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks which traditionally for 500 years have been part of the Newfoundland fishery and the Canadian fishery.

I have used almost every occasion in this House when the subject of fisheries has come up to encourage the House and Parliament to approve the motion so that Canada could control its straddling stocks of groundfish, particularly northern cod.

It has been a fixation with many that this be done. I am not saying that this is my only mission here but when I campaigned to come to this House of Commons, I had two concerns. I stated them and they are on the record.

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One was my opposition not to free trade but to the free trade agreement as it was negotiated. The second one was my concern that we should as soon as possible establish Canadian jurisdiction over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

I have given many speeches and my colleague behind me has given many speeches, as I said earlier. We have attacked it from the chronology of why we want it. We went through the chronology of the fact that Canada is in a unique position because it has a unique and large gradual continental shelf that goes out to 200 miles. In certain cases, it goes beyond. That is what makes this case unique.

We have argued that in an international court of law. International marine law is conducted differently from civil law and we have made the case, I am confident, that this motion is doable. We can go before the Court of International Justice and Marine Law and plead our case. We could have done so years ago. If we could have done it then we at least could do it now.

In an effort to perhaps try a different approach to convince my colleague and this House to take this action and to vote positively on this, let me work it backward. Let me explain where we are now, why we are where we are now and what this motion will do to perhaps alleviate the situation.

On July 2, 1992 the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a two-year moratorium on northern cod. This is a migratory straddling stock off the coast of Newfoundland in NAFO, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, area 2J-3KL. The 3KL area is adjacent to my riding and to the northeast coast of Newfoundland.

The government established this moratorium in the belief that a complete closure now offered the only chance for the spawning biomass of the northern cod stock to recover quickly to long-term average levels.

The estimate was that 9,000 fishermen and 10,000 plant workers and trawlermen would be thrown out of work as a result of this moratorium. The Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce believes that the moratorium will affect 80,000 people in the Atlantic region, including 60,000 people in Newfoundland and Labrador. I have to add sadly that in a part of the country where a steady job is a status symbol this is atrocious. It is sad.