

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

FISHERIES—ASSERTION BY CANADA OF MANAGEMENT JURISDICTION OVER CONTINENTAL SHELF

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, on October 13 I asked the Minister of the Environment and Fisheries (Mr. Davis) this question:

In the wake of last week's conference over which the minister presided, is the government now giving serious consideration to asserting Canada's jurisdiction over the continental shelf in so far as fisheries management is concerned and, if so, when may an announcement be expected?

The minister gave this reply:

Mr. Speaker, our primary concern is for sound conservation over our continental shelf, and we require the co-operation of other nations to bring that about.

The minister is always very precise in his replies. It was once said of an official of this House years and years ago that while he may never have lacked conviction, he was sometimes a little short on accuracy. I remember a matter raised by my colleague from St. John's East who had noted that in an official publication of the House the minister was designated only as Minister of the Environment. I note that the parliamentary secretary is listed in *Hansard* as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, not to the Minister of the Environment and Fisheries, so I take it he has not troubled to make that correction. While it was not in the designation, what I think is far more important is whether or not the fisheries aspect is in the consideration of the man in charge of the portfolio.

• (10:00 p.m.)

It is interesting that at this time when our country is troubled about the state of its secondary industries, when we are in great travail over those industries, our basic or primary industries are at their nadir. No one has to talk about wheat, no one has to mention mining; certainly no one has to talk about what is happening to the great pulp and paper industry, or what happened long before "Nixonomics." We have watched with great anxiety what is happening to the most ancient of our industries, namely, fisheries.

There is a serious story in so far as the east coast is concerned. Stocks are being depleted and many important fish are in very serious short supply. There is overfishing. There is foreign intrusion with dangerously sophisticated equipment. All sorts of fish are being swept up from the bottom of our seas. This constitutes a grave challenge. I am afraid there is not sufficiently high priority for the fishing industry of Canada.

In my province—I think this is unique to that province—the government has managed to elude, evade or escape its proper and constitutional responsibility for fishing centres, the fishing industry and, more important, the harbours in this precarious industry. According to the British North America Act, section 91, subsections 9, 10 and 12, special responsibilities are set out in respect of beacons, buoys and lighthouses. These are clearly the responsibili-

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ty of the federal government. In the province of Prince Edward Island, under the device of designated ports some ports get the attention of the federal government through the Department of Public Works and these are designated not by the federal government, which has the responsibility, but by the provincial government. So there is a clear evasion of responsibility. But on October 13 I was particularly interested in what was being done on the international front in respect of our dangerously depleted fisheries.

As one looks at this problem one is concerned about the contradistinction which is being made by the government, that the vigorous unilateralism in the Arctic is not reproduced in reference to the Atlantic. In reference to the issue of the 12-mile limit I remember when the former Secretary of State for External Affairs, now government leader of the Senate, came to the External Affairs Committee and proclaimed the 12-mile limit. My colleague, the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt), said there were so many officials there that there must be some announcement no less important or world shattering than a declaration of war. Then we had the appearance of the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union. I am not one of those who deplore that or one who fears or criticizes it, but I say in reference to that visit that through all the current exercises in summitry we must ask the question: What is the concrete result thereof?

In the communiqué which followed the exchange of pleasantries at the time of the visit of the distinguished leader of the Soviet Union to our country, there was no place or priority for fisheries. I had hoped that that occasion would have served as an opportunity to express our concern about our fishery and the control of the continental shelf. I have attended many international gatherings and I know that when you have the Soviet bloc you have quite a bloc: they are fairly numerous and extremely cohesive. But, Mr. Speaker, after all the tumult and shouting about coexistence had died down, and after the captains and kings had departed, what was there left for the east coast fisherman? Did we move one inch forward in our claim to management of fisheries resources over our continental shelf? Did we get the support of the Soviet Union? Did we gain their assistance for any future international conclave?

Now comes the question that the minister must answer and that his parliamentary secretary, who is here tonight, must answer. Are we trying hard enough to safeguard the livelihood of the men who are engaged in this most perilous of industries? I would profoundly, happily and joyously welcome some indication to show that apart from our interesting talk about controlling the environment and advancing on many esoteric grounds, some serious attention has been given to this much assaulted industry and that action has been taken.

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, I would be a fool if I were to disagree with the hon. member who has just spoken and suggest that there is not a serious depletion of our fisheries resources on the east coast particularly. This is a recognized fact. The government is conscious of it and is conscious also of its responsibilities as a coastal state. The government knows that the sea must be managed more intelligently in the future. As I say, the government knows