

requires. We have laid them out and hope that they will be debated very seriously. Possibly further changes are necessary, but I hope not.

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Chairman, a few sentences in response to the statement of the minister. If the minister of external affairs wishes to make a comment about the present position of the Canadian government on foreign overfishing, I will sit down for the next 15 minutes.

The Minister of Fisheries has made a puny and puerile statement in defence of the charges that were made this afternoon as he has tried to justify the position taken by this department. The first matter he referred to was that of prices on the American market. If the minister wants to take credit for this, I will give him all the credit he wants, but he knows that prices on the American market today have very little to do with anything that the Canadian government has done. Iceland and other nations trading into the U.S. market are having the same experience as Canada. As a matter of fact, the highest price for fish blocks on the U.S. market was 42 cents, and Iceland is exporting one pound fillets for 69 cents. It is really a firmed-up market. As the minister knows, the price of salt fish results largely from the decline in stocks. There will never be a problem in selling Newfoundland salt fish again in any part of the world, because there has been such a decline in production that we will not have much to sell.

The minister did get applause from his colleagues on one point and I am sure this is a reflection of the lack of understanding—I was going to say “ignorance” but that might give a wrong impression—of the action that he has taken on the east coast in keeping other nations out of the Gulf. The minister talks of the Gulf of St. Lawrence as being an exclusive Canadian fishing zone. I was in the House on the day he got up and bragged about the Gulf being an exclusive Canadian fishing zone. Yet in the very next breath he talked about having to negotiate the phasing-out of other nations. If this is our pond, then is the minister going to put a great big net across the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Strait of Belle Isle so that fishing vessels from other nations cannot get in? This is how the minister talks. He says it is going to take ten years to phase out these nations with traditional fishing rights.

The minister placed a 12-mile limit around the south-western part of my province. The French came to our very doorstep, and the minister says we do not want to offend the French. I do not know whether it is the minister of external affairs who does not wish to offend the French or the Minister of Fisheries, but the fact is we are pussyfooting around with this problem and the government is showing no leadership.

The minister talked about quotas, which was the third great strike in his favour. He said we have established certain quotas and would take action toward establishing national quotas. As far as the quota on haddock is concerned, our stocks of haddock have declined to the point where they cannot be replenished. By the time we establish closed fishing zones on Georges Bank the stock will be completely decimated. So why talk about quotas in this sort of situation?

Government Organization Act, 1970

The minister then claimed that the reason he is paying so much attention to the environment department is that we have to control pollution in order to save the fisheries. I say that is absolute nonsense. The minister says that we have to control smoke coming from the smokestacks in Montreal, and control the sewage from the Prime Minister's residence in order to save our fishing industry. How is this going to save the fishing industry on the Grand Bank 400 miles off the east coast of Canada? I suggest to the minister that his statement in this regard is absolute gobbledygook and nonsense. Let me tell the minister that there is more to the fisheries of Canada than the fish that swim in the polluted waters of the Fraser River. The minister himself, coming from British Columbia, should recognize that.

The minister says we have to play diplomatic games; that we have to court the French, the South Americans, the Japanese, the Danes and all the other countries who are going to attend the Law of the Sea conference. Is there no room at all for Canadian initiative and aggression? After all, we are talking about our resource. We own the bottom of the ocean on the continental shelf as well as all the minerals and oil, even the crabs and the lobsters that are there. The minister agrees that these resources are ours, even out to the Grand Bank and the Flemish Cap 400 miles off the east coast of Canada. If any plane flies across that area, it must be by bilateral agreement. We have 55 or 60 bilateral agreements in this regard. The resource that lies within this area is fish.

• (9:50 p.m.)

At the Law of the Sea conference in 1958 we were told to take unilateral action if we could not obtain bilateral or multilateral agreement. Is there any initiative on Canada's part in this regard? Do we have to continue pussyfooting with France, Germany, Russia and other countries, getting nowhere? This is what I would like to know. Why does the Minister of External Affairs not get up and tell us whether he is prepared to trade anything for our fisheries resources? Surely he will tell us that Canada will not trade one single ounce of diplomatic or international good will or relationship for our fisheries. Is this true? Let us have the truth here in the House of Commons.

Is the Minister of Fisheries prepared to go to France and state we are not satisfied with the action they are taking in respect of fisheries on the east coast of Canada, and we intend to do something about it? Will he say that, or will he go over and kiss the back of the hand of whoever is sent from France and say they are a great bunch of fellows and we want them to buy whatever it is they are buying from us—culture, or whatever else—and we are not prepared to talk fisheries?

Is the Prime Minister going to talk hard-nosed facts to the Soviet Union? Is he going to tell them they are the greatest predators, raping our resources and hurting many thousands of our families? Is that what the Prime Minister is going to say?

Mr. Sharp: You should be the foreign minister; you would be wonderful.