

*Coastal Fisheries Protection Act*

will to resist and to oppose all future overtures seeking agreement on any problem.

In my view, this amendment is useless as a solution to the preservation of our fisheries resources. It is useless because it attacks the incidental problem, which is not a problem at all if the main problem is solved. Our main concern as Canadians is the decline of our fisheries resources on both coasts. In view of the need for increased food supplies in other countries, this should also be the concern of the nations which send huge fleets to fish off our shores. This amendment will only annoy those nations that fish the resources on our two coasts and may well, in the final analysis, prevent a proper approach being taken toward these nations by Canadian authorities in an effort to solve our problem.

I repeat that the approach must, and can, only be made at the negotiating table by Canadians talking common sense to their opposite numbers. We must also point out to all concerned at an international conference on the conservation of fisheries resources that there are only so many fish on the fishing grounds of the North Atlantic and the Canadian west coast. These resources can be ruined for years or completely destroyed by overfishing or by the use of destructive fishing gear. It must be pointed out that these resources must be preserved for ourselves and for future generations by conserving the spawning grounds and the spawning stock in our time, and that time is now.

In my opinion, it is mandatory that this action be taken through international negotiation and agreement. I ask the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, what efforts he has made recently to call an international fisheries conference to deal with the Poles and the East Germans who, he said in his speech in Montreal on February 5, are making massive raids on an awesome scale on our fish stocks by moving in on our continental shelf with dozens of big, modern vessels.

Surely the minister is not going to sit idly by hoping, wishing and praying that some action will be taken by our spineless, wishy-washy Department of External Affairs. The Minister of Fisheries and Forestry should take the bit in his teeth and call for the immediate establishment of an international fisheries conference, so that our urgent fisheries problems can be discussed with the countries which share this problem.

I say this because the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) has obviously no interest in our fisheries problem at the inter-

[Mr. Crouse.]

national level. While he busies himself trying to get Red China to recognize Canada, our fishing resources are being raped, pillaged and plundered by eight of the largest fishing nations of the world which operate right up to our three-mile limit. In the meantime, we Canadians stand by helplessly, begging our Department of Fisheries and Forestry and our government to take some action on legislation which was passed with great Liberal fanfare and bravado away back in 1964.

The jellyfish approach to our fisheries problem by the Secretary of State for External Affairs was never more apparent than when, in reply to my question concerning the number of meetings held between the French authorities and the Canadian government on the question of jurisdiction over the territorial waters surrounding the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon relative to the control of fishing activities in the past few years, he said there had been no discussions concerning jurisdiction over our territorial waters in this area.

There have been no discussions on oil rights, mineral rights and fisheries rights, and no meetings were held between the French and Canadian authorities on this matter during the last two years. Yet this is one of the major stumbling blocks to the establishment of geographical co-ordinates and the drawing of base lines, the very basis of the legislation passed in 1964, which would give us the right to reserve for our fishermen the resources off the coast of Atlantic Canada.

The Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, in a speech in this House said that we have established exclusive fishing zones. Exclusive for whom, I ask him? Certainly not exclusive for Canadians. They are exclusive for the Spanish, the Portuguese, the French, the Italians and the fishermen of the United Kingdom and the United States. They are exclusive for the fishermen of Norway and Denmark. Canadian fishermen from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the other Atlantic provinces must take their trawlers 12 miles off the coast while we see our resources raped, pillaged and plundered up to three miles off the coast or within our territorial boundary.

This is what the government has done to us in 1970. It has taken no action on legislation that was passed away back in 1964. I charge this government with flagrant disregard for the rights of our fishermen in Atlantic Canada. By its lack of action in calling for an international fisheries conference to deal with