

*N.W. Atlantic Fisheries Convention Act*

in the current situation so far as the effect of this treaty, in law, is concerned. I think that perhaps it lies at the root of some of the problems that were outlined in respect of the very existence of the North Atlantic species of salmon.

In addition to that, of course, the limitation in the original convention expressly puts the territorial waters of any of the countries involved out of bounds so far as the application of the treaty is concerned. I think this should be stressed in light of the remarks of the hon. member for St. John's East because, if my understanding of the situation is correct—I know that he is much more familiar with the geography of that part of the world than I—much of the salmon take of the Danes is within their territorial waters off the coast of Greenland.

• (4:10 p.m.)

This highlights some of the inadequacies of our ability to establish a rational arrangement under the rule of law on the high seas. In light of statements and statistics given to this House and to the Standing Committee by the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis), the result has been obvious. There has been a direct decrease in the annual catch, particularly of Canadian inshore fishermen, in recent years. This indicates that despite the provision in the treaty for scientific research into management of the resources, our high hopes for conservation of the various species when we put the parliamentary stamp of approval on this convention in 1954 are a long way from realization.

I think the House should understand that when we consider the modest proposals contained in the bill before us. These will certainly not bring an end to the problems in respect of the North Atlantic fishery, the survival of some of the stocks and the maintenance of the income of Canadian fishermen. Very startling things have happened since 1954. At that time few of us realized the technological changes that would bring about huge, highly mobile fleets travelling the high seas of the world with the support of mother supply ships. The countries historically concerned with the Northwest Atlantic fishery are today by no means the only countries involved. There is an indication of this in the adherence to the treaty since the original signing of a number of other nations, notably the U.S.S.R. and Japan. When this bill was originally put through Parliament it did not occur to me that one of the signatories of the Northwest Atlantic fisheries treaty would be Japan. We in British Columbia tend to think of that country as a Pacific fishing nation.

This is undoubtedly one of the compounding factors in the decline of many of the resources of the northern Atlantic, Mr. Speaker, and although the commission has not yet come to grips with it they will have to do so in the future. Obviously, no nation is more concerned with the success of the work of the commission than Canada. While it is true that many of these resources lie in what traditionally has been regarded as the high seas, nevertheless what we are discussing are to a large extent Canadian resources. I think we must make it clear that we regard them as such, and that while we have no

[Mr. Barnett.]

desire to take a "dog in the manger" attitude toward the resources of the sea adjacent to our shores, our special position can and must be recognized by other countries.

I think we would all agree, Mr. Speaker, that the proposals in the bill represent a modest improvement in the terms of the original treaty. It proposes to strengthen the policing powers, and I suppose it says something for the years of association of the fishing countries of the Northwest Atlantic that they are prepared to agree to mutually policing the vessels of member countries.

It seems to me that ancillary to the passage of this measure perhaps Canada should undertake more adequate policing than it has in the Northwest Atlantic. Because of the special interest and importance of this area to Canada, and in particular to the Atlantic region, I suggest that within the limits of this new arrangement we should take full advantage of the opportunity to ensure that the regulations put forward by the commission, and accepted, are in fact enforced. This may require larger expenditures by the department but I think it would be well warranted.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think we must recognize that many of the basic problems will remain unsolved after the passage of this measure. It seems to me that the situation is highlighted by the recent action of the minister with regard to cutting back on the Atlantic salmon take of Canadian fishermen and by the depletion of resources available to fishermen on the Atlantic coast. It underlines the need to have a Minister of Fisheries in Canada.

While I do not want to enter into debate on another bill, the fact that we are to enter into important international negotiations when the commission meets in June, the fact that we will have to speak out strongly and firmly to the Danes, the fact that the other bill makes no provision for any reorganization of the Department of External Affairs, the fact that our international relations pertaining to fisheries have been carried out by the Department of Fisheries and Forestry in the past and that our Department of External Affairs has had no structure to deal with these issues, underlines the fact that when we go to an international convention we need someone who can speak for us officially, with the prestige of being the Minister of Fisheries for Canada.

• (4:20 p.m.)

To me this underlines the fact that at international conventions, quite apart from other gatherings, we need someone with the title and prestige of Minister of Fisheries for Canada. I say that because the kinds of questions surrounding this little amendment to the international convention highlight a worldwide situation. The amendment highlights whether the law of the jungle is to prevail on the high seas, whether there is to be ruthless exploitation and extermination of the living resources of the sea or whether we are to move to something better so that those resources will be managed and used for the benefit of mankind under the rule of law. These are the kinds of questions that come to my mind as I consider the ramifications of the bill before us.