

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

I also believe we should be prepared to review our membership in ICNAF if we are, in the words of the minister, to change ICNAF from an academic exercise by scientists into a fish management authority. Again, for the life of me I cannot understand why the minister did not make his statement in Washington today rather than in this House, because that is where he should be to impress upon the various nations overfishing in the North Atlantic that we have a real problem and that we have to find a reasonable solution to it.

Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member for South Shore (Mr. Crouse) that the matters raised in this statement are very important and urgent. In light of Your Honour's suggestion I would invite him and his colleagues to raise this subject matter for more extensive debate tomorrow when I believe an opportunity to do so will be offered.

The minister has outlined Canada's position at the ICNAF meeting, a position that can only be described as a very generous position to the other 14 nations involved in the commission. I say this advisedly because it is a well known fact that by and large the groundfish stocks off our shores are to be found upon the continental shelf and, as hon. members know, the resources of the continental shelf from the sea bed downward belong to the coastal states under international law.

Some of us feel that the logical position we ought to develop at a future law of the sea conference is that we have a prior claim to the resources that lie above the seabed on the continental shelf off our shores. Therefore Canada, in going to the meeting which opens today in Washington and suggesting that other fishing nations in the North Atlantic be entitled to take up to 80 per cent of their long-term average catches based on past fishing efforts, I suggest is making a very generous proposal. If the other nations involved have any regard at all for the conservation of the resources of the sea, I do not see how they can do otherwise than accept this offer without undue debate.

The minister makes reference to sustained yield catches being based on scientific management techniques. I think all hon. members, including the minister, would agree that techniques of scientific management of the various fish stocks have not yet been developed to perfection. Indeed, his suggestion of a 10 per cent contingency allowance bears that out.

• (1430)

I would suggest that if there has been any value in the work of ICNAF to date it is that some basis has been laid for a scientific understanding of fish stocks in the North Atlantic on which future management techniques can be based. Regretfully, actual fish management has not so far been developed. At this time and in the light of known facts, unless we are prepared to accept scientific management of fish stocks in the North Atlantic there has been little point to ICNAF and this exercise which goes back almost 20 years.

When we speak of scientific management I hope that not only Canada but all the other nations mean genuine scientific management and not just management based

[Mr. Crouse.]

primarily upon the marketing desires of the various fishing nations in relation to what they catch from time to time. We have had some unfortunate experiences within our own area of jurisdiction. I feel there has been some yielding to pressure for overcatching of stocks based on the desire of those doing the harvesting to sell their catches, and that genuine scientific management has suffered. The sad story of the herring fishery on the Pacific coast of Canada is an example.

The minister makes a brief reference to Atlantic salmon. This matter has been the subject of extensive discussion in the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry and perhaps it does not need to be expanded upon at this time.

Despite what I consider to be the ill-advised agreement made between the United States and Denmark for a long-term phasing out of Atlantic salmon fishing, I hope the United States will join Canada in seeking an immediate ban. Some people have suggested that the main pressure within the United States has come from sports fishermen. I suggest that these people should throw their weight behind the position that Canada is seeking in its presentation to the commission in the hope that in the end both the United States and Denmark will agree that Canada's position regarding Atlantic salmon is much sounder than that in the agreement to which I have referred.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Davis) made his statement available to us only a few minutes before the beginning of this afternoon's sitting. I regret that, once more, only the English text of the statement was distributed. I hope that next time the hon. minister will have something else to offer us than apologies, and that he will be able to let us have the French text at the same time as the English.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that in some department there is failure to apply bilingualism. Before speaking of bilingualism—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member should restrict his remarks to fisheries problems rather than turning to those of bilingualism.

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I understand your point of view full well, but almost every time a minister makes a statement we *Créditistes* get a copy of it in English only. We trust the situation will be rectified.

Mr. Speaker, in his statement the minister gave the priorities the government intends to discuss at the meeting of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries which opens today in Washington.

It is not so much what the government intends to discuss in Washington that is important to the Canadian fishermen who are dissatisfied at this time, and rightly so, but rather the concrete results that will stem from the meeting. Not only should the minister and the officials of his department not make any concessions at the meeting, but they should insist on our sovereignty over the adjacent continental shelf to a depth of 1,000 fathoms off the Canadian coast as well as over its resources.