

most members on this side of the House were elected. Consequently, there is little to be done to do them a favour. Anyway, I believe it will be realized on closer examination that when I say "every analyst or inspector", I do mean, Madam Speaker, to provide every government department whose ships are sailing our oceans with the necessary authority to stop and examine ships that might fail to comply with our regulations or statutes.

This bill does not deal with a number of problems which were raised by hon. members opposite. I guess they took this opportunity to raise questions which are of concern to them. I am also concerned about those questions, especially the matters of sailing and supertankers. I tried my best to answer their questions at a different time and I will do so again in the future, but tonight is not the right time to tackle those problems which, although they are not totally unrelated to this bill, are not exactly the subject of our debate tonight.

This bill bears a certain relationship to the Law of the Sea Conference which was mentioned by some members although the Oslo Convention was initiated a long time before the law of the sea discussions. It even took place before the Stockholm conference, which brought to the attention of the whole world that great problem of ocean pollution which is a due cause for concern for every country.

This bill, the Stockholm conference and other events too, are steps from a total freedom of oceans towards a certain limitation of that freedom and an identification of the interests of countries with a seafloor in order to protect and develop oceans, and also towards the necessary development of sea management principles and, in a more significant way, the realization that we have to bring countries with a seafloor to exercise that management duty in areas off their coasts which might fall under their jurisdiction.

The necessary protection of environment is one of the strongest and most significant arguments at our disposal to demand that the management authority of maritime countries be extended to a 200-mile limit for instance. Such is the character of the request made by Canada and other countries at the Law of the Sea Conference. That bill, however, goes quite beyond that 200-mile area which could be covered under this new jurisdiction granted to coastal states. It goes quite beyond that, applying as it does to an area where the sea is quite deep, an area which formerly was supposed to belong to everyone.

Grotius who proclaimed total freedom of the seas is severely challenged nowadays. The sea, which is a common heritage of mankind, must henceforth be submitted to regulations governing its use. Consequently, even if it is claimed that oceans are the common heritage of mankind, some countries must take charge of their management so we will not make ill use of them as in the past on the plea that they were entirely free.

This bill deals with the practice of dumping waste in the sea without worrying about the effects of such a practice.

Western Grain Stabilization

As the sea once belonged to everybody, all those who wanted to get rid of their waste, dumped it into the sea.

And it was believed, as I mentioned earlier, that the sea had the ability to purify everything; some substances however cannot be eliminated, and there is a point of no return beyond which the sea might not be able to rejuvenate itself.

A number of the problems which my hon. colleagues have mentioned—need I remind them—are already covered by such other legislation as the Shipping Act and the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. There are also regulations which govern the activities of ships within ports, and prohibit the discharge of waste waters in areas which are in the immediate vicinity of ports. Bill C-37 supplements a number of existing legislative measures in Canada which permit us to administer the oceans. This measure will be characterized by the fact that in so doing, we are joining other countries in the signature of an agreement to protect the oceans of the world.

This act will succeed. Its concept reflects the efforts and reflexion of many countries. It is not, as suggested an hon. member, a licence for polluting the sea. Surely the hon. member is aware that if we make it compulsory that an application for a permit is made before anything is dumped into the sea, it is because we have every intention of checking the nature of the substance to be dumped, the manner in which it will be discharged, and the place where it will be disposed of. The permit is an instrument allowing us to control the activity.

Several countries have expressed their intention of ratifying the convention, but ten countries of the world have already enacted the required legislation for consistency among them. The convention will be effective as soon as fifteen countries will have signed it. We are seeking for Canada the honour of being among the first fifteen signatories to the convention. We should like to be among the first who will co-ordinate their administrative measures for the enforcement of a legislation of this extent.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I support the motion that Bill C-37 be referred to the committee for consideration.

● (2100)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Forestry.