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negotiating process which occurred over last weekend. As I say, it is a case of bad judgment. As a result, we may have rushed into an agreement fraught with danger which could have serious implications for the province and for my constituents. I say "could"; I am not saying that it does. I feel that certain aspects of the agreement, had the Province of Newfoundland been represented, would not have been in it. People who live in the situation, as I have for many years and as have many Members from Newfoundland, would have been able to foresee possible complications which could arise with regard to the agreement.

I want to review very quickly the concessions in the agreement in respect of fish stocks. It says that the French are entitled to an additional 3,000 metric tons of cod in an area known as 2GH, which is in the far North. I do not think we would find anyone who would argue very strenuously against that concession. It is a surplus stock. Presently it is not being harvested by the fishing industry and as such it is not a difficult concession with which to live.

The agreement also stipulates that in the zones 4RS, 3PN, and 4VN the French fleet is entitled to some 3,500 metric tons of cod, and again there is no argument. It is an historical right, particularly for our neighbours who live just off our shores. Although the French Government does not recognize it, the agreement also says that they are entitled in the disputed area to a quota of some 6,400 metric tons. I think that is a fair allocation under the formulas.

There are two other aspects to the agreement. One is access to an area known as the Burgeo Bank. I have concerns about that one. They may turn out to be unfounded. I hope they do. However, for those who do not know, the gulf stocks migrate to the Burgeo Bank and we have just removed, because of the expiry of an agreement at the end of the past year, the French metropolitan fleet from the gulf. We did not renew the agreement. By allowing them access to the Burgeo Bank fishing area which is in the 3PS zone but not in the disputed area of 3PS, my concern is that we have again allowed the French metropolitan fleet access to some gulf stock, which as you, Mr. Speaker, should know and as all Members of this House should know is in serious decline. The biomass of the gulf fishery is declining at a very rapid pace. That fishery, unless the stocks stabilize and start to increase is in great trouble now, but that situation will be aggravated, which is a very serious concern on my part. Many inshore fishermen on the southwest coast of Newfoundland depend entirely on that stock for their livelihood.

• (2330)

The other area this agreement addresses is the area known as 2J+3KL, the northern cod stocks, which is the backbone of the Newfoundland fishery. This area has been in dispute in our provinces for some time. Now there is a possibility provided in the agreement that recognizes the right of access to that stock by the French. That is disconcerting, Mr. Speaker. The agreement does not specify the level of any quota that might

be awarded, and that gives me a ray of hope. I have made it known for the past two days that I am not prepared to accept a quota in 2J+3KL that will negatively impact on any fishermen or the Newfoundland fishing industry in general. That stock is the future of the deep sea fishing effort in my province. We will be watching, I say we as Newfoundlanders, the negotiations as they progress if, indeed, they do progress at all. We will not accept any allocation that is not acceptable to each and every Newfoundlander affected.

I do not see and I doubt if you will find a Canadian who can see any surplus fish in that zone in the foreseeable future, Mr. Speaker. There will be none. In fact, we have reduced our domestic quota for 1987, not very significantly but there is a reduction. That indicates a stock with problems. I do not see how the Government or any Government can as a result of that accept the awarding of a quota to a foreign Government. I will not accept that on behalf of my constituents.

As I said earlier, the Government of Canada has acted in good faith. We have one basic objective, a real and admirable concern, and that is to resolve the dispute in 3PS. There is no easy solution to this problem, it has been ongoing for too long. We have to find a solution. Events of the next few months hopefully will give us that solution.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to participate in this debate at this hour of the night. Like my colleagues before me, particularly the Member who just spoke, the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George (Mr. Price), I find the situation of great significance. The significance is not only for the people of Newfoundland, but I believe it extends beyond their boundaries. Indeed it is a Canadian problem affecting Canadians from coast to coast.

What do we have here, Mr. Speaker? What is at stake in this issue? Before one answers those questions one has to examine what has gone on in the past. We have seen the issue of a tariff regarding salt cod, an issue with the softwood lumber and, yes, more recently, an issue with the Christmas tree producers. Now we have this issue of fish. The people of Newfoundland, as evidenced by their Members of Parliament in this Chamber, by provincial Members of the House of Assembly, and by commentators in that province, agree without qualification that that resource is akin, if you will, to the wheat of the prairie grain farmer, to the oil and gas in Alberta and, yes, to the language in the Province of Quebec. This issue is vitally important to the economic viability and the future of the Province of Newfoundland. No matter how you cut the cards, no matter who cuts the cards, the standard or the test that ought to be used should be an objective and reasonable test. In this instance, as we have seen in the three previous examples, Canadians, Newfoundlanders, and the people of Atlantic Canada have now again received the brunt of the central Government's policies as they relate to fisheries.

We have heard some statements by the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie). The French have had treaty rights to Canadian territorial waters going back to 1904