

Private Members' Business

on vessels from each contracting party for 10 per cent of fishing days.

NAFO also adopted measures to control harvesting of small fish including new minimum sizes for cod and flounder as well as a new minimum mesh size.

Other measures will improve the effectiveness of inspections at sea by patrol vessels from Canada and other NAFO contracting parties.

The public information campaign has also been in high gear. Teams of journalists from EC member states, notably Spain and Portugal, and from other NAFO member countries were invited to Newfoundland for briefing on the state of the stocks and on surveillance and control measures in place in the Canadian zone. They were able to see for themselves the impact of stock declines on Newfoundland communities.

In May, teams of union representatives and colleagues in this House travelled to Europe to register Canadian concerns and to seek co-operation. Support from Portuguese fishermen was particularly striking. Efforts of other non-governmental organizations and churches were also supportive.

These are some of the ways we are working to end foreign overfishing on the high seas. We are using every available avenue open to us within international law and diplomacy to bring about an effective solution.

The best news is that we are making progress and I hope we will keep on.

Mr. David D. Stupich (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, as a student of agriculture at the University of British Columbia between 1946 and 1949, I was told by one professor after another of the importance of saving agricultural land in the province of British Columbia.

I was told that 3.5 per cent of the province was arable and we were rapidly losing the best of that land to other uses. It was being paved for parking lots, for roads. It was being built on for shopping centres, houses, all kinds of buildings. Anybody who wanted a piece of land looked first to the agricultural land because it was the easiest to develop.

I became Minister of Agriculture in September 1972 and within six months I introduced legislation to save agricultural land.

That legislation attracted so much attention that the Tories in the legislature at that time—and there were some—went so far as to move a want of confidence against the Minister of Agriculture for daring to bring in that kind of legislation. The Liberals opposed it just as loudly and just as forcefully. The Socreds opposed it. None of them proposed anything but they all said we were moving too quickly.

I did not think we were moving quickly enough. I had waited 24 years, from 1949 until 1973, to introduce that legislation and in the meantime some half a million acres of the best land for food production in the province, some of it the best land in the world, had been lost to agriculture. We had not moved quickly enough.

I was reminded of that this evening when the hon. member for Delta on behalf of the government said: "We are making progress so let us not ratify right now. Let us continue the progress we have been making all this time and some day we will get to ratification".

The Law of the Sea Convention was approved 10 years ago and all we can talk about is making progress. Ten years. Fifty-two nations have signed as ratifying it. We need eight more. We do not have any of the major sea-faring nations. We do not have Canada. We do not have the U.S. We do not have Great Britain. We do not have Germany. But we do have 52 and we need eight more.

If one nation, one among the ones I have named, had the intestinal fortitude to ratify that treaty, then perhaps others would come on board and we would be getting somewhere other than simply making progress.

• (1730)

At the rate we are making progress what is going to happen? We have already, dare I say, lost the North Atlantic cod fishery. Some will say: "No, we have a two-year moratorium". It takes six years for a cod to become mature enough to start reproducing. It is a two-year moratorium, but it is two years because it is saleable right now. If that moratorium is to achieve any useful purpose, and we do not know that it will, we do not know that there is still time for the species to survive, it is not going to last two years. It is going to be more like 10 years before we can start fishing cod again.