

*Private Members' Business*

The ratification would obviously help Canada. It would be good for Canada in a number of ways.

First, it would ensure that high sea fisheries would pursue ecologically sound practices, including deploring the use of drift net catching practices and others.

Second, it would enhance the maintenance of ecological marine systems in the oceans.

Third, it would complete the protection of fish stocks within the 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

Fourth, the Law of the Sea provides the signatories with the appropriate mechanism, so to say, to implement these principles at the earliest possible opportunity. This is why it is so important to reach the magic number of 60 nations. As I mentioned earlier, we only have 53 nations ratifying it.

Finally it would also provide momentum to the implementation of the recommendations of the Harris report which include, and I quote from it, "the management of all fish stocks indigenous to the Canadian continental shelf that extends beyond the 200-mile limit and the right of Canada to deny authorization for foreign fishing fleets to fish within its exclusive economic zone".

What more do we need? What more do we want? These are clear benefits that are lost to Canada, that are lost to our fishermen. Therefore the question that one inevitably must ask is: Why has Canada not ratified the Law of the Sea? Why does it seem to be afraid to do so?

The government has admitted that provisions in the Law of the Sea Convention would be able to aid Canada in its attempt to protect cod stocks off the coast of Newfoundland.

There was a statement made in Cancun on May 6 of this year by the minister of fisheries himself. It is on the record. There was a statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, whose parliamentary secretary I suppose will reply, in *Hansard* of February 25 of this year. Yet the government is dragging its feet and refusing somehow to sign the pact. It seems to be waiting for other nations to come forward before we will ratify it.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, at the preparatory committee meeting in New York last March, Canada submitted, along with 40 other nations all of which except one, New Zealand I believe, ratified the Law of the Sea, resolution 16 for the protection of the oceans and all kinds of seas. It included enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, the gulf we were debating last night, coastal areas, and the protection, rational use and development of living resources. It called for, and I quote, "the establishment of principles and measures for an effective regime based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea".

Canada supported this measure. It is a good measure. It is a very good document because it is intended to strengthen the provisions in the Law of the Sea. We did this last March or May. I am not sure of the date exactly, but it is a very recent initiative and a good initiative for that matter, particularly with reference to the articles 63 and 64 I mentioned a moment ago regarding the management and the protection of straddling stocks beyond the 200-mile limit.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs also stated that the government was working on a number of other international initiatives intended to establish regimes for our oceans and its resources. This is what she said on February 25, 1992 in the House of Commons, yet the step of ratifying the Law of the Sea Convention is not being taken.

In Cancun the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said: "This resolution outlines principles and measures that will give proper effect to the provision of the Law of the Sea Convention". This was the measure supported there. Therefore, how can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans talk about clarifying and strengthening provisions in the Law of the Sea Convention, supporting the convention itself, giving it momentum and giving it his endorsement when the government has yet to ratify it? This is the basic question.

Without being a signatory to the Law of the Sea, Canada's efforts to get nations on side, to understand our position of straddling stocks, for instance, are weakened. Our credibility is affected. It is as basic as that. To