

*The Address—Mr. Carter*

countries to speak to Chinese delegations about Canada's desire to recognize Communist China. Yet the same minister is unwilling to lift a finger to negotiate with the other communists, the Soviet Union, with a view to implementing a policy that would have the effect of conserving our marine resources to stave off their complete depletion. The answer is quite obvious. Most of us are not at all fooled by the minister's reluctance and by the unwillingness of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to try to negotiate on our behalf. I think the average Canadian is no fool and we are all getting the message loud and clear.

The Minister of Fisheries and Forestry is, of course, aware of this problem but he is obviously unable to get the necessary support from his cabinet colleagues and from the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Kaplan:** Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** That is a decision for the hon. member who has the floor. Does the hon. member agree?

**Mr. Carter:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kaplan:** Is the hon. member aware of the Russian-Canadian treaty that was signed yesterday dealing with fishing rights off the Grand Banks?

**Mr. Carter:** I am aware of one thing, that the hon. member's knowledge of the situation and of what happened between the Soviet Union and Canada is as good as any knowledge of nuclear physics. The hon. member should know—I inform the House of this, in the event hon. members are misled by what he said—that the agreement entered into this week by our government and the Russian delegation had nothing whatever to do with the Grand Banks, much to the shame of the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry and of the government of which he is a member. We contend that had some effort been put into it, and had the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry accepted our advice and suggestions, while the Russians were here and were prepared to sit down at the bargaining table we possibly could have negotiated an agreement which would have taken in the continental shelf, including the Grand Banks.

**Mr. Bigg:** He was misled by his own minister.

**Mr. Carter:** I hope the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Kaplan) is listening, because I believe he is one of those who share this view. The hard fact of the matter is that this government appears to have adopted an attitude whereby it is embarrassed to talk about fish. The word "fish" has been a dirty, four-letter word. We believe it is incumbent upon this government to immediately take an international initiative, not at the next Law of the Sea Conference but immediately, to convene an international conference on fish conservation and management. We feel, also, that if agreement among all nations is impossi-

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ble, then Canada must take unilateral action to protect and conserve this vital resource. We believe—in fact we know—that Canada has every right to take such action under articles 6 and 7 adopted by the International Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1958.

We believe, also, that the Russians, who are the biggest offenders when it comes to plundering the marine resources of our east coast, have a tremendous investment in fisheries. They have outfitted large fleets of vessels to cross the Atlantic and fish in this part of the world. In view of that fact and in order to protect their investment, we believe they would be prepared to listen to reason and to agree upon some form of management control. Certainly, the least we can expect from our government is that they recognize the problem, endeavour to do something about it and do not use the ostrich psychology of sticking their heads in the sand and pretending the problem does not exist.

• (5:10 p.m.)

In case hon. members opposite continue to entertain any doubt about the gravity of the situation, I shall read the following statistics into the record: The catch, in quantity, of our inshore fishermen in Newfoundland has dropped roughly by half over the last ten to 15 years. The average catch of the average small inshore fisherman in Newfoundland is down to about 50 per cent of what it was in the mid-1950's. Meanwhile, the total catch in the northwest Atlantic by member nations of the International Commission of the North Atlantic Fishery increased from two million tons in 1958 to four million tons in 1968. The Soviet catch in this same area and during the same period increased from 117,000 tons to 741,000 tons. The cod catch of the member nations increased from 880,000 tons to 1,860,000 tons while on the other hand, in the period from 1963 to 1969, Newfoundland's total cod catch dropped from 450 million pounds to 300 million pounds, despite the fact that Newfoundland fishermen have been operating at their efficiency peak and are better equipped than they have ever been to prosecute the cod fishery. According to these statistics, and to people eminently qualified to speak on the subject, cod stocks on Canada's east coast could very well be in serious trouble within five years.

As for haddock, the statistics are frightening. In 1965 the total catch in the northwest Atlantic was 249,000 tons, of which the Russians took 129,000 tons. In 1968 the total catch was 97,000 tons, even though some nations had quadrupled their efforts. I would refer at this point to a statement made by the Minister of Fisheries on October 14, in which with a great deal of enthusiasm he announced that fishing for haddock on George's Bank will be closed to Canadian fishermen from October 23 until the end of the year in keeping with a conservation recommendation made by the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries.

In effect, the minister said that Canada is now prepared to lock the proverbial door after the horse has been stolen—because he knows, as do we, that haddock