

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES STATEMENT

Peter Walker's statement this afternoon was virtually a re-run of his last statement. The Opposition, led by Norman Buchan, claimed that the Commission's proposals were a sell-out of the UK fishing industry. The Opposition would support proposals for a 12 mile exclusive zone, and 50 mile dominant preference zone; but the Commission's proposals for a 6 mile exclusive zone and a 6 mile dominant preference zone, coupled with a 34% quota were a flagrant breach of the Conservative Manifesto commitment. Mr. Buchan claimed that the Manifesto committed the Government to seeking a quota of two-thirds.

Both Donald Stewart and Kevin McNamara claimed that the fishing industry had been blackmailed into accepting the Commission's proposals, and referred to the press reports that the National Federation of Fishing Organisations were deeply unhappy. Bruce Millan, concluding for the Opposition, demanded that the Government should make clear what the Commission had proposed, and what Mr. Walker would accept.

Peter Walker said that it was important to draw a distinction between the Commission's proposals and proposals acceptable to the Government. He would only accept proposals that the fishing industry could live with. He presumed that the House would do the same. He had not accepted the Commission's proposals, but it would be quite wrong to reveal his negotiating position. There was no question of breaching the Conservative Manifesto: as Norman Buchan admitted, the Manifesto gave no explicit commitment on quotas, and simply said that any agreement should recognise that "UK waters contained more fish than those of the rest of the Community countries put together". The NFFO might have criticised the Commission's proposals, but they had assured him that they were happy with his negotiating position. In answer to Mr. Millan, he said that the Commission's proposals were available to the House, and had been considered by the

Scrutiny Committee. He rejected a suggestion from Robert Maclennan that we might seek a majority vote in the Council in the face of Danish intransigence.

Wh

30 June 1982



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

W Rickett Esq
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London SW1

30 June 1982

Dear Willie

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS: 28-29 JUNE 1982

... I attach a copy of the statement which Mr Walker hopes to make in the House today. I would be grateful for immediate clearance.

I am copying this letter to Bernard Ingham; David Heyhoe (Leader of the House's Office); Murdo Maclean (Whip's Office, Commons); Michael Pownall (Whip's Office, Lords); David Wright (Cabinet Office); Keith Long (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), and to Private Secretaries of the other Agriculture Ministers and members of the OD(E).

Yours sincerely

Robert Lawson

ROBERT LOWSON
Private Secretary

DRAFT STATEMENT ON THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCILS ON

28/29 JUNE 1982

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the meetings in Brussels of the Council of Agriculture Ministers on 28 June and the Council of Fisheries Ministers on 28 and 29 June.

My Rt hon Friend the Minister of State and I represented the United Kingdom at the Agriculture Council.

Agreement was reached on devaluations in the green rates of Denmark, Ireland and Greece to reflect the effects of the recent monetary realignment in the EMS. The French Government had requested a selective devaluation of their green rate for pigmeat and sheepmeat and the Belgian Government wanted equivalent adjustments to those granted to the French. These arrangements for France and Belgium were not agreed.

The Council had further discussions on the new framework regulation on wine and these will be resumed at the next Council.

/ Together with ...

Together with my rt hon Friends the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of State in my Department, I represented the United Kingdom at the meeting of the Fisheries Council.

After a general discussion on the Commission's proposals on total allowable catches and quotas, there were a series of bilateral discussions between the Commission and individual Member States to establish priorities. In the course of the meeting it became apparent that the Danish Minister was not prepared at this meeting to negotiate towards a settlement of the Common Fisheries Policy. However, at the end of the meeting the Commission tabled new proposals on the total allowable catches and quotas and these will be considered at the next meeting of the Council in the second half of July. I shall consult the industry on these proposals.

~~Mr. Speaker: I have noticed. There are mistakes in Hansard, and they will be corrected in the revised edition.~~

~~Mr. John Silkin (Deptford): The House is grateful, Mr. Speaker, for your decision to consider the matter raised a moment ago. It is more difficult for the Opposition than for the Government.~~

~~Mr. Speaker: There should be conversations through the usual channels and then with me. I want to serve the interests of the House as a whole.~~

Council of Agriculture Ministers

3.57 pm

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Peter Walker): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the meetings of the Agriculture and Fisheries Councils which took place earlier this week.

At the Agriculture Council on 19-20 July, at which the United Kingdom was represented by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State and my hon. Friend the Minister of State Northern Ireland Office, agreement was reached upon a package of measures for the wine sector. I am pleased to inform the House that we obtained satisfactory safeguards for our alcohol and spirits industries.

On 20-21 July there was a meeting of the Fisheries Council at which I was accompanied by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Minister of State.

The Danish delegation refused to approve measures involving agreements with Norway. This prevented the Commission from negotiating with the Norwegian Government on total allowable catches in respect of joint stocks which would have considerable impact upon quota allocations.

Nine member States agreed that until this negotiation could take place there could be no meaningful discussions on total allowable catches, quotas, and access. This was certainly the view of the United Kingdom Government, since important quotas for cod and herring are involved.

Therefore, it was agreed that negotiations on those major aspects would be resumed at a meeting of the Fisheries Council to be held in Luxembourg on 21 September. Agreement was reached on several implementing measures under the marketing regulation which will come into operation on 1 January 1983.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Renfrewshire, West): The first and most obvious matter is that the House would like to know exactly what the Minister means by "satisfactory safeguards for our alcohol and spirits industries." Is the industrial alcohol industry in Britain to be fully protected and, if so, how?

Although the statement was short, two extremely important matters arise from it. One would not have been unduly concerned about delay in a negotiation of this kind for two months were it not for the fact that, by the end of the year, the present fisheries agreement runs out. Is the Minister not negotiating with partners who have all the cards in their hands and who possess the veto, and that it is basically our fish that are at stake? Does the Minister agree?

Does the Minister agree that, as the Ministers are meeting again in September, as he has already surrendered to the French, and as the Danes are objecting and he is likely, in order to get agreement, to surrender to them eventually, it would be wrong for him to come to an agreement in Brussels while the House is still in recess? I hesitate to suggest that the House should be recalled to discuss the matter, but at least he should not come to an agreement with his Common Market partners in Brussels until he has had the terms of it ratified by the House on our return.

What does the Minister intend to do in the remaining two months of the year if no agreement is reached and the

people being tortured, and the lack of legal safeguards in trial procedures, and requests Her Majesty's Government to make known its condemnation to the Iranian authorities of these heinous human rights violations at every opportunity and to support the work of Amnesty International in combating them.

Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to speak to his right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary so that the Government's condemnation of mass executions in Iran may be known at every opportunity?

Mr. Biffen: I shall certainly draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the hon. Gentleman's point.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Huddersfield, West): My right hon. Friend will recognise that the Supply day debate on Tuesday is of great importance to the House. I am certain that many Labour Back Benchers will wish to contribute, and many hon. Members such as myself wish to tell the Opposition a few home truths about British industry. Will my right hon. Friend please arrange for statements not to be made on that day so that we have the maximum time for debate?

Mr. Biffen: I can give no guarantee of that, but I shall certainly bear in mind my hon. Friend's point.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): As there is great concern in the arts world and among all hon. Members about the threat to the theatre museum project, as is evidenced by early-day motion 649, and since the Minister will make a decision on that matter in early August, would it not be advisable for the House to have a chance to express its views on that important museums project before the recess?

[That this House strongly supports the project of a Theatre Museum which has been in being now for over 50 years; welcomes the action of successive governments in supporting it; believes that the Museum would constitute a major cultural and literary centre as well as providing an important tourist attraction; and calls on the Government to proceed with the project as a matter of urgency.]

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman may like to know that there will be an Adjournment debate on that subject on Thursday.

Mr. Edward Lyons (Bradford, West): In view of the way that mobility allowances for the seriously mentally disabled are being piled up unused by hospital administrations, will the Leader of the House arrange with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services for a statement to be made as quickly as possible on how the Government propose to ensure that those disabled persons do have the benefit of that mobility allowance instead of the people who inherit after the death of those patients?

Mr. Biffen: I acknowledge at once the seriousness of the hon. and learned Gentleman's point. I shall certainly draw it to the attention of my right hon. Friend.

Business of the House (Mr. Speaker's Statement)

3.55 pm

Mr. Speaker: I have three short statements to make.

The House is aware that applications for a second Adjournment debate are not acceptable after 8 pm, for reasons that have been outlined before.

I have decided that it is in the interests of the House that applications for second Adjournment debates on a Friday will not be accepted after 10 am. It would be unreasonable to expect the people concerned to change their arrangements for a Friday after that hour.

For the debate on Thursday 29 July on the Second Reading of the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill, hon. Members may hand in to my office by 9 am on Wednesday 28 July, their names and the topics they wish to raise. The ballot will be carried out as on the last occasion. An hon. Member may hand in only his or her own name and one topic.

The debate will cover all the main Estimates originally presented for the current financial year in House of Commons Papers Nos. 212 and 214, and the Supplementary and Revised Estimates presented since then in House of Commons Papers Nos. 429, 430, 431, 432 and 440. It will be in order on Second Reading to raise any topic falling within the compass of those Estimates.

I shall put out the result of the ballot later on 28 July.

I remind hon. Members that on the motion for the Adjournment of the House on Friday 30 July, up to eight hon. Members may raise, with Ministers, subjects of their own choice. Applications should reach my office by 10 pm on Monday next. A ballot will be held on Tuesday morning and the result made known as soon as possible thereafter.

Mr. James Wellbeloved (Erith and Crayford): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you to consider the possibility that in due course you might wish to review your first statement in the light of experience? I make this point because on a normal week roughly five hours elapses between the start of proceedings and the expiration of the time at which applications for a second Adjournment debate can be made.

On a Friday morning only half an hour is being allowed and that is insufficient time for Back Benchers, first, to assess likely progress of the House, and, secondly, to make the application to you. I accept that your ruling will stand for the time being, but I would ask you to give further consideration in the light of experience.

Mr. Speaker: Of course, I shall review the position after a period. I am trying to consider those who have to answer debates as well as those who initiate them. People try to make their arrangements for the weekend. If the House does not approve, the position can easily be changed.

Mr. Peter Bottomley (Woolwich, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I hope that, in reviewing the position in the light of experience, you will consider that 11 o'clock is perhaps a more suitable time than 10 o'clock. That is the time when statements are normally made.

On another point, I should be grateful, Mr. Speaker, if you would look at c. 407 of yesterday's *Official Report* where two of the paragraphs are out of order.

derogation runs out? He has told us that he has contingency plans. The clock is ticking very loudly now. We need to know what the contingency plans are to protect our fishing stocks against the depredations that loom ahead for them.

Mr. Walker: The safeguards for alcohol are similar to those agreed at the 18 May Council, which were considered by the industry to be completely satisfactory. They applied to the intervention of wine distillates, and the new regulation stipulates that their disposal must not disturb markets for alcohol and spirit drinks. With regard to other distillates which receive FEOGA marketing aids, the Commission has stated, and categorically minuted, that it will not allow the aids for which it is responsible to undermine existing alcohol and spirit drink markets.

I know that the hon. Gentleman will be delighted—he always is at any success on the part of British negotiators—that total safeguards have been obtained. I can claim that it was a considerable achievement, because it was done by the Minister of State and not by me.

With regard to the fisheries negotiations, the hon. Gentleman suggested that we were negotiating with partners who were all waiting eagerly for the end of the year. Clearly that was not the case at the Council meeting, where we had the support of eight of the partners, all of whom want agreement to be reached as speedily as possible. I hope that there will be a successful settlement in September. That will be in the interests of our industry.

As for getting the prior approval of the House, my position is exactly the same as that of the right hon. Member for Deptford (Mr. Silkin) when he held my office.

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I propose to allow questions to run until 4.20 pm by the digital clock. If there are brief questions and brief answers, it should be possible to accommodate most of the hon. Members who wish to speak.

Sir Patrick Wall (Haltemprice): As the settlement of the common fisheries policy has again been delayed, will my right hon. Friend explain to the House the exact legal position that we shall face next year concerning fishing up to the beaches? I do not expect him to go into details, because obviously he will wish to keep his hand covered.

Mr. Walker: The view of the British Government is that the wording of the treaties is such that, in the event of there not being an agreement, there will not be a free-for-all and fishing up to the beaches, but it is a matter which others could dispute and which could be decided in the courts. In looking at the wording, I cannot say with certainty what is the exact legal position, but the Government's interpretation—and that of the previous Labour Government—is that it does not allow for fishing up to the beaches.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Stirling, Falkirk and Grangemouth): In view of the Minister's statement about the safeguards for the wine and alcohol industries, may I ask whether he is aware that the 18 May agreement was based on the distillation of 55,000 hectolitres of wine alcohol? Is he now saying that we are still distilling the 55,000 hectolitres, or that a greater quantity is being distilled? If that is the case, can he say how much more

than 55,000 hectolitres is being distilled, because obviously that will distort the market, despite the non-disturbance clause?

What studies are taking place in the EEC on alternative uses of the wine lake—for example, for animal feedstock?

Mr. Walker: With regard to the hon. Gentleman's last point, I am glad to be able to tell him that, at our request, the EEC has agreed to make studies.

With regard to the hon. Gentleman's first point, obviously the total volume will vary, depending on the size of the crop, but the non-disturbance agreement for all the wine going into intervention totally applies and I am glad to say that it is part of the regulation.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): Has the Minister made it perfectly clear during negotiations that, come what may, Britain will in no circumstances allow fishing up to the beaches?

Mr. Walker: Yes, Sir.

Sir Walter Clegg (North Fylde): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the latest Danish delay could be fatal for the port of Fleetwood? Is he further aware that two middle water fleet trawlers have already tied up? A meeting is to be held this afternoon, as a result of which the rest may be tied up. It may well be that 38 lumpers will be laid off. Is there not a case now for financial help for the British fishing industry, pending a final solution?

Mr. Walker: As my hon. Friend knows, the specific problems of Fleetwood result from a range of difficulties, not all connected with the negotiations. Meetings took place yesterday with my right hon. Friend and further meetings will take place early next week.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): Does the action of Denmark lead the Minister to conclude that there is now a real prospect that no agreement will be reached before the end of the year? In those circumstances, will he give the House an undertaking that by no later than October he will come forward with his plans to ensure that our industry can develop, expand and succeed after 1 January 1983?

Mr. Walker: I still believe that there is a very good prospect of an agreement during the period of the Danish Presidency. Having been present at past meetings, as has the hon. Gentleman, I have witnessed the sorts of pressures now being put on the Danish position and upon the Danish Government. It is very unlikely that the Danish Presidency will proceed during the coming six months on the basis of refusing to come to a sane and sensible agreement on fishing. If I am proved to be wrong, we shall have to be prepared to come forward at an appropriate time—which will have to be judged in the circumstances of the dates of meetings and so on—and make clear what action we shall take.

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Aberdeenshire, East): My right hon. Friend's statement will be greeted with dismay and disappointment by all British fishermen, and particularly those in my constituency. As my right hon. Friend is aware, the pelagic fleet fishing has already been delayed.

Can my right hon. Friend give the House an assurance that there will be active policing to ensure that the Danes do not overfish in the North Sea during the two months

[*Mr. Albert McQuarrie*]

before the next meeting? If they do, they will be taking advantage of the British fishermen who are endeavouring to carry out proper fishing.

Mr. Walker: I am glad to say that one of the things agreed yesterday was a roll-over of the various conservation measures. I assure my hon. Friend that, in those waters in which we are responsible for surveillance, proper surveillance will take place.

Mr. John Home Robertson (Berwick and East Lothian): As there will be only 72 fishing days between the date set for the next Fisheries Council meeting and the deadline on 1 January next year, and as the House is rising next week for the recess, will the Minister take this opportunity to tell the House of his contingency plans for protecting British fishing interests at the beginning of next year?

Mr. Walker: No, Sir, because I do not negotiate on the basis of announcing what I shall do if I do not succeed.

Mr. Barry Henderson (Fife, East): Is it not ironic that apparently it is the Danes who are holding up the settlement, bearing in mind that it was their ruthless industrial fishing methods that caused great problems in the fishing industry generally?

As there was the possibility of reaching a settlement on an earlier occasion, when France was causing the difficulty, can my right hon. Friend tell us whether there are any aspects of that near agreement which the Danes were then accepting but are not accepting now?

Mr. Walker: No, Sir. There has been no basic change in the position. One of Denmark's problems is that it has a minority Government, but it also has the responsibilities of the Presidency of the European Community. One matter that emerged clearly from the meeting was that the rest of Europe expects Denmark to conduct its Presidency in the interests of Europe.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): For how long will the Minister retain his innocent belief that there is goodwill in the Community to reach a fisheries settlement that is satisfactory to British fishermen, as there is always one obstructive fishing nation in the EEC? He said that his position on ratification of the agreement by the House of Commons was the same as that of my right hon. Friend the Member for Deptford (Mr. Silkin). Can he remind me of that position?

Mr. Walker: The right hon. Member for Deptford said that if one reaches an agreement that is satisfactory to the industry one must accept it and then justify that action to the House of Commons. That is what he told the House. It is obviously difficult to reach agreement when each nation wishes to have the maximum amount of fish and the best access arrangements. There is a strong desire to reach agreement among nine countries and I hope that, before the end of the year, that desire will extend to the Ten.

Mr. Robert MacLennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Is not the lesson of the latest Council meeting that our vital national fishing interests would have been better protected if the Minister had asked for majority voting on the issue earlier? Secondly, as the Danes are in the Presidency and that option will no longer be open, is there not also a risk that the right hon. Gentleman's earlier settlement of

agricultural price fixing, which he deliberately linked to the budget, will be used to link the budget to a fisheries settlement? Can he assure us that there will be no such linkage?

Mr. Walker: I have had the delightful task of negotiating in Europe for the past three years and I believe that there would be nothing more disastrous for the United Kingdom than to have majority voting. I should not join any process of majority voting, although no doubt on some occasions it would be to our advantage. As to the linkage between the budget and other matters, the proposals now advanced by the Commission on quotas will mean a better position than at any time in the Community's history, including the time when the Leader of the Social Democratic Party was President of the Commission.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): As my right hon. Friend the Minister has greatly reassured me, and possibly others, with his clear statement to the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Penhaligon) that the Government will not permit fishing up to the beaches at the end of the year in the absence of an agreement, does he agree that it would be much more satisfactory, instead of seeking a hasty and unsatisfactory deal, to work to a deal that would be acceptable to all fishing organisations, including the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations?

Mr. Walker: I shall try to reach an agreement that has the support of all the fishing organisations. At a recent meeting with the NFFO president there was no disagreement about our negotiating position. I asked this organisation's leaders whether, if we reached a settlement that was agreed by the fishing organisations that were responsible for 80 per cent. of the catch, they would wish to veto the entire agreement. They replied that they would not.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, Central): There will now be another two months' delay before arrangements are made. Is the Minister now beginning seriously to consider giving financial aid to the industry, such as operating subsidies, because bankruptcy is facing both large and small firms?

Mr. Walker: We are considering details that have been sent to us, but, as the hon. Gentleman knows better than most hon. Members, the fishing industry has diverse interests. A substantial section of the fleet has had much higher catches and prices during the past six months. Other sections of the industry are now in difficulty. We are considering carefully the detailed picture that is being presented to us.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My right hon. Friend has not said anything about the re-establishment of the British veto. As this is fundamental to the Agriculture Council, can my right hon. Friend say what discussions there were about the restoration of the British veto and when he expects to see it restored? If he has any doubt about its restoration, what discussions has he had with his colleagues as to the action that should be taken by the Government?

Mr. Walker: Community procedures are a matter for the Foreign Affairs Council and they have been discussed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): The Minister mentioned the political pressures on Denmark, which he said had a minority Government. Will he add proportional representation to those problems?

Mr. Walker: It is not for me to analyse why the Labour Government in Denmark is a minority one.

Mr. David Crouch (Canterbury): Is my right hon. Friend aware that many hon. Members feared that he might have been tempted into a trade-off with the French and the Italians about the distillation of wine and that we are grateful to him and to my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for not having been so tempted? Will he acknowledge that, in reaching the decision, he was helped by advice from Members of all parties?

Mr. Walker: I am grateful for the support of hon. Members on both sides of the House. The fact that the final wording of the agreement is highly satisfactory is to the credit of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, who spent four and a half hours negotiating the wording and who eventually achieved what he required.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Rother Valley): Although the Minister's comments on industrial alcohol could have been worse, does he agree that the larger problem of the enormous over-production of wine in the Community, which leads to the astonishing and increasing export of large volumes of wine to third countries at prices such as 4p and 5p a litre, should command even more attention than he has devoted to the problem so far?

Mr. Walker: Yes. I did not go into detail about all the wine regulations that I mentioned in my statement. However, I know the hon. Gentleman's interest in the topic and he will find important structural proposals in the package, which I hope will reduce surplus wine production.

Mr. Buchan: I hope that the Minister has taken on board the genuine, sombre concern that is felt on both

sides of the House about the time factor. As we understand the position from his statement and from answers, there was agreement by everyone except Denmark. Does that mean that he is in total agreement about the limits laid down in the Commission documents?

Secondly, what does the right hon. Gentleman intend to do about confirming with the House the September agreement, if it should be reached then, because we are not talking about a normal agreement? The Minister referred to my right hon. Friend the Member for Deptford (Mr. Silkin). We are now talking about the next 10 and probably 20 years of fishing policy, and the Minister must obtain agreement from the House before he concludes that.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman is wrong about the latter point. The right hon. Member for Deptford was also questioned about total agreement on the common fisheries policy. He reasonably and rightly said "If in the middle of the night I have the opportunity . . ." I agree with that view.

I made it clear in my statement that nine countries agreed that we cannot meaningfully discuss quotas, access and total allowable catches until we know the additional available catches from the Norwegian joint stocks. The opportunity to discuss and make changes in those areas did not occur at the meeting, because we agreed that until the details of the additional stocks were available we could not discuss quotas.

Mr. Buchan: The Minister answered a question that I did not ask. I asked him specifically about the six-mile or 12-mile limits. Does he agree with the Commission document on those limits?

Mr. Walker: Those matters are still under negotiation and the position is changing continually. I have agreed no proposals for access with another country or with the Commission.

St. David's Hospital, Dyfed

4.19 pm

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Nicholas Edwards): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on St. David's hospital, Carmarthen, and mental illness services in Dyfed.

A series of reports since 1974 has drawn attention to the poor quality of mental illness services at St. David's hospital and elsewhere in Dyfed. These include two unpublished reports by the National Health Service health advisory service in 1974 and 1977.

In the course of the regular contacts by my officials, it became increasingly clear that the necessary remedial action was still not being taken by the authority. In September 1981, the General Nursing Council decided to withdraw approval from St. David's hospital as a statutory nurse training school. In November 1981, arrangements were put in hand for a formal visit by professional staff of my Department.

The visit took place in January of this year, and, as a result, a team from the NHS health advisory service was invited to conduct a special review of the shortcomings and deficiencies of the service. The team's report has just been presented to me and made available to the health authorities in Dyfed and the county council. I have discussed the report with the chairman of the East Dyfed health authority. The authority will consider it at a special meeting next week. In view of its nature, I thought it right immediately to make it available to Parliament, and copies have been placed in the Library.

The report confirms the sharply critical nature of so many earlier comments about St. David's hospital and states that no real progress has been made in remedying the very serious deficiencies that are revealed. It speaks of

"a marked absence of discernible, credible leadership"

at the hospital, states that

"no one seems to be responsible and accountable"

and concludes that

"the management structure has not proved equal to its task and has failed at all levels".

There is criticism of the approach and attitude of some of the doctors and staff and of unsatisfactory relationships between staff. The health authority is criticised for failing to set proper standards of performance and failing to control and monitor those who should be responsible for supervision. The report is strongly critical of the relationship between the health authority and the social services department.

As a consequence of these failings by management, standards of nursing in some wards are described as deplorable. Some wards are said to be filthy and, in the opinion of the team, little regard is paid to privacy and the preservation of human dignity. Standards of hygiene are poor.

Conditions due to overcrowding in some long-stay wards are described as intolerable. The report makes depressing reading, but I should make it clear to the House that there is no suggestion in the report that there has been any wilful mistreatment or cruelty to patients.

The report refers to the relative underfunding of Dyfed health authority and states that the underfunding of psychiatric services is a major factor causing many of the problems. The report is also critical of the present system of joint financing in Wales.

A detailed prescription for action can be prepared only after the health and social services authorities have considered the report, but I intend to see that two of the main recommendations of the report are carried out without delay. The first is that there should be an immediate exercise involving outside expertise to improve management structures and attitudes in the mental illness services in Dyfed.

Secondly, I am establishing a review group for a limited period to ensure that the performance of the organisation makes progress towards agreed objectives and the main recommendations of the report. This review group will be appointed by me. It will be chaired by one of my officials, and it will report direct to me. It will include independent senior professional staff from outside Dyfed.

As to Dyfed health authority's underfunding, I have continued the efforts, begun in 1975 by the previous Government, to tackle this long-standing problem. In all, since 1975, in addition to its share of general growth, Dyfed has received extra growth resources of over £3.2 million, of which the present Government have provided over £2 million. Between 1974 and 1982, no other health authority in Wales has received so large a percentage share of growth.

However, I have to say that the health authority has within its discretionary resources accorded very low priority to mental illness services, despite increasing pressure from my Department to give it higher priority and to remedy the acknowledged deficiencies.

There have been capital developments. I have approved central funding projects worth over £5 million in total to improve accommodation and relieve overcrowding at St. David's hospital and to improve facilities for the mentally ill in Dyfed.

Regarding joint finance, as part of the "Care in the Community" consultation exercise, the Government have been carefully considering the case for liberalising the present arrangements, and we hope to make a statement before the House rises for the recess.

As to the immediate future, the Welsh Office will pay the costs of the review group and the management exercise I have described. I shall also be urgently reviewing the financial requirements of the East Dyfed and Pembrokeshire health authorities in the context of the needs of the Health Service in Wales as a whole to ensure that the authorities give at least the same priority to the development of mental illness services as most of the other health authorities have done for some considerable time past.

I shall be considering further action necessary in the light of this report, and I shall, of course, keep Parliament fully informed.

Mr. Alec Jones (Rhondda): It is right and proper that the Secretary of State should have come to the House to make the statement and to publish the report. It is important that all those involved in St. David's and everyone responsible for the care of mentally ill patients in Dyfed should be aware of the totally unsatisfactory conditions that prevailed at St. David's, as the report clearly shows. Does the Secretary of State agree that the report confirms previous reports and reviews carried out by professional bodies and justifies the criticisms made by the responsible trade unions, NUPE and COHSE, in the report that they submitted to the Secretary of State earlier this year.

Agriculture and Fisheries (Ministerial Meetings)

3.31 pm

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Peter Walker): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the meetings in Brussels of the Council of Agriculture Ministers on 28 June and the Council of Fisheries Ministers on 28 and 29 June.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State and I represented the United Kingdom at the Agriculture Council.

Agreement was reached on devaluations in the green rates of Denmark, Ireland and Greece to reflect the effects of the recent monetary realignment in the EMS. The French Government had requested a selective devaluation of their green rate for pigmeat and sheepmeat and the Belgian Government wanted equivalent adjustments to those granted to the French. These arrangements for France and Belgium were not agreed.

The Council had further discussions on the new framework regulation on wine, and these will be resumed at the next Council.

Together with my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of State in my Department, I represented the United Kingdom at the meeting of the Fisheries Council.

After a general discussion on the Commission's proposals on total allowable catches and quotas, there were a series of bilateral discussions between the Commission and individual member States on establishing priorities. In the course of the meeting it became apparent that the Danish Minister was not prepared at this meeting to negotiate towards a settlement of the common fisheries policy. However, at the end of the meeting the Commission tabled new proposals on the total allowable catches and quotas, and these will be considered at the next meeting of the Council in the second half of July. I shall consult the industry on these proposals.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Renfrewshire, West): This tiny mouse of a statement conceals a major surrender by the Government. The Government were preparing to surrender on quotas and limits, and their bacon was saved by the Danes. That was Danish bacon with a vengeance. Is it not the case that the quota agreement that the Minister was prepared to accept was half of that which would be determined by the amount of fish in our waters? Is it not a fact that in its manifesto for the last election campaign the Tory Party said that, unless the limits and the quotas were right, it was prepared to go it alone? Are the Government prepared to go it alone? If they do, they will have the support of the Opposition.

The Minister has been telling us that he has the support of the industry, but he should read the fishing industry newspapers more often. "No deal" say the fishermen's organisations in Britain. We have to stick by the decision, which was repeated in the House year after year, that there would be no surrender beyond the 12-mile exclusive limit and the 50-mile dominant preference.

All the indications are that the Minister is prepared to surrender on both those points. He is opening up the East

Coast, for example, through the bilateral agreement with the French. If he is prepared to put forward proposals on 12-mile and 50-mile limits we shall support him.

Would it not have been more sensible, instead of entering into a squalid arrangement under derogation in 1972, if we had decided that we would do what other independent nations have been able to do and stand by a 200-mile limit?

Mr. Walker: I assure the hon. Gentleman that he will never have the pleasure of seeing me come to the Dispatch Box with an agreement that the industry does not support. Therefore, I am willing to be judged upon our ability to obtain an agreement that the industry wants and agrees with. I presume that the House will be only too eager to support an agreement that the industry requires.

I have complete and detailed agreement with the industry as to our objectives on quotas. I am glad to say that we have made some further progress towards achieving these. Therefore, the only agreement that I would recommend to the House is one that provides quotas satisfactory to the industry, a substantial improvement in the access arrangements that have operated in living memory, and a secure and expanding future for the industry.

Mr. Buchan: Would the Minister agree, for example on the six-mile limit and on the six-mile dominant preference only? Would he agree on only 34 per cent. on quotas, reduced from the two-thirds that the Tory Party manifesto argued for? If not, he should stand by the pledge that he gave in 1979, that in the absence of such an agreement the Government would not hesitate to take the necessary measures on their own.

Mr. Walker: As far as I know, no political party, or the Labour Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in his wildest moments, ever suggested two-thirds quotas. The hon. Gentleman waves a document at me. If that is the manifesto, let him quote the promise about two-thirds of the quotas.

Mr. Buchan: The manifesto says something that is even stronger:

"United Kingdom waters contained more fish than those of the rest of the Community countries put together".

Will the right hon. Gentleman stand by that?

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman has been exposed once again in making a false allegation.

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): Does the Minister accept that, as he is in the process of negotiating a new common fisheries policy, any question of historic rights to breach the 12-mile limit ought to be disregarded? Does he accept that, if chaos exists because of his failure to secure a policy, it his duty to ensure that the United Kingdom fishing grounds are protected from ravishment by Common Market vessels?

Mr. Walker: My only objective in negotiating is to provide British fishermen, including Scottish fishermen, with a better future than they have had for many years, since we lost the Icelandic waters. If I cannot attain that objective, and the industry does not agree that I can attain it, I shall come to the Dispatch Box and say that there is no agreement.

Sir Peter Mills (Devon, West): All of us who think about these matters acknowledge what the Minister is doing—maintaining a firm stand in the interests of British

[Sir Peter Mills]

fishermen. Will he bear in mind that the reaction of the Danes is a serious setback and that he may have to make unilateral plans to deal with this and to protect fishermen, particularly in the South-West of England?

Mr. Walker: This illustrates the failure of the Labour Government to obtain any agreement, and the failure so far of the present Government to obtain agreement. This creates a much worse problem for our fishermen than there would be if a sane and sensible agreement had been obtained. As to the immediate problems of the fishing industry, as my hon. Friend knows, the Government have so far provided twice as much aid to the industry as did the Labour Government.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): Is it true that the Danish Government are asking for free fishing without quotas? How can that be a sensible policy? Since the Danish Presidency which begins next month will take us beyond the end of this year, will the Danes achieve their objective by refusing to come to an agreement in the next six months?

Mr. Walker: As the hon. Gentleman says, the main prize of a common fisheries policy is a quota system which is strictly enforced. There would be no point in a common fisheries policy without that ingredient. Denmark is alone in the view that for other than two species no quotas should be applied. I am sure that that would suit the type of fishing in which Denmark has been involved for some time, but it cannot form the basis of a fishing policy.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): Why has the right hon. Gentleman done worse for England than the Secretary of State seems to have done for Scotland? What concessions between six miles and 12 miles has the right hon. Gentleman given to the French? How does he intend to prevent the concessions from escalating into a massive increase in take from those waters?

Mr. Walker: No concessions have been agreed with anybody. There has been no agreement whatsoever on access proposals. So far in the negotiations we have obtained substantial improvements on the question of historic rights for many parts of the coastline that compare with anything in living memory. We have achieved a substantial improvement for our coastal fishermen as a whole. I hope that there will be further improvements. Many of our fishermen wish to continue to enjoy historic rights in other nations' coastal waters and we have negotiated for that.

Mr. Robert Hicks (Bodmin): On the specific question of access to the six-mile to 12-mile band, and in particular in relation to the French, what safeguards has my right hon. Friend obtained and what additional safeguards does he hope to achieve in respect of controlling the catch that the French may take if they are allowed to continue to fish within that band?

Mr. Walker: The Commission has accepted that on 1 January, or when agreement is reached—whichever is the earlier—the first ever enforcement provisions will come into force. One fishing organisation—that mentioned by the hon. Member for Renfrewshire, West (Mr. Buchan)—queried control and said that there would not be adequate penalties. I was pleased to inform it that the

penalties already approved by the House of a fine of £50,000 maximum for any one offence with the confiscation of equipment would apply.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, Central): Has not the right hon. Gentleman blackmailed those in the industry to agree to whatever proposals he can get so that they receive some subsidy from him to help them in the chaos that they are experiencing? What does the right hon. Gentleman intend to do for the deep water ports? Is he aware that the port of Hull, for example, had 103 vessels 10 years ago and now has only 21, half of which are not fishing? About 135,000 tonnes of fish were landed there 10 years ago and only just over 25,000 tonnes are landed today. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he has done nothing for them, that there is no third party agreement and no compensation and that thousands of fishermen are unemployed?

Mr. Walker: It is untrue that I have at any stage tried to bargain or, to use the hon. Gentleman's word, blackmail those in the industry to accept subsidies in exchange for an agreement. I ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw his allegation because it is totally without foundation. He knows more than anybody that the decline in the long-distance fleet took place primarily during the Labour Government's period in office.

Mr. David Myles (Banff): Now that negotiations have again broken down, will my right hon. Friend soon announce an aid programme for the industry, especially for the hard-pressed pelagic sector?

Mr. Walker: We are reviewing the figures on further aid submitted by the industry. The current position varies from one sector of the industry to another. Some sectors have had larger catches and better prices this year.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): Does the Minister recognise that other countries have been subsidising their fleets to keep them at a certain level, whereas in the United Kingdom there has been a total collapse of ports such as Hull, which is facing a crisis and is in the hands of the banks? Does he recognise that the difference between his approach and that of the Danes is that he is prepared to accept the voice of the industry whereas in Denmark the parliamentary committee has to be satisfied before an agreement is accepted?

Mr. Walker: No one can accuse me of not coming to the House immediately following each meeting that I have had and submitting to the Scrutiny Committee every document involved. I shall not be accused of not doing that. The hon. Member must be pleased that the present Government have doubled the aid that the previous Government gave to the industry.

Mr. John Townend (Bridlington): Does my right hon. Friend accept that the industry needs an agreement in the near future? Will he repeat the pledge that he gave to the House earlier, that if the Danes continue to veto an agreement the Government will not allow fishing up to our beaches by the end of this year?

Mr. Walker: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that it is not satisfactory to argue that it is in our interests not to have an exclusive 12-mile limit so that we can fish within another State's 12-mile limit? Will he abandon the Government's decision not to

press ahead with the policy adopted by successive Governments, including the last Labour Government, that there should be an exclusive 12-mile limit with the phasing out of all historic rights?

Mr. Walker: As the hon. Gentleman discovered when he was involved in these activities, the Labour Government got nowhere near to a negotiating position, or to an agreement satisfactory to our industry. Even now, with plenty of negotiations still to come, the access proposals for the British fishing industry are better now than at any time in living memory.

Mr. Robert MacLennan (Caithness and Sutherland): Have the new proposals from the Commission moved closer to or further from the Government's negotiating targets? If all that stands between the British fishing industry and a settlement is the Danish interest, will the Minister not hesitate to seek to persuade his colleagues to accept the precedent established at the agricultural price-fixing and proceed by majority voting?

Mr. Walker: I would not proceed on majority voting, believing as I do that it would be completely against Britain's interests. I would not argue for it when it suited me and argue against it when it did not.

I was asked whether the latest proposals were an improvement. The proposals were tabled last night and delivered after the Council meeting ended. I have not had time to discuss or study them in detail, but I understand from preliminary observations by officials that they show some further improvement in our quota arrangements.

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I propose to call the four hon. Members on the Government Benches and the five on the Opposition Benches who have tried to catch my eye—if they are brief.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend East): My right hon. Friend has said that the industry's agreement is required before he can present a case to the House. Does he mean all major sections of the industry and not just a so-called majority consensus? Would it not help the House in considering the various proposals if he were prepared to say what legal powers Britain has to exclude French and other EEC vessels from fishing up to our beaches after 31 December if there is no revised common fisheries policy?

Mr. Walker: We have expressed our view and interpretation of the treaty and the statements in it. My hon. Friend has asked me what in my interpretation constitutes the fishing industry. So far, in every detail that I have negotiated, I have carried the whole fishing industry with me. In the detailed and prolonged talks that I had with those in the industry in the past two days they were still in agreement with every detail of my negotiating position.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Grimsby): Will the right hon. Gentleman confirm the widely published reports that he was prepared to accept a settlement that fell far short of the requirements of the House and the commitments of the Conservative Party manifesto and which has already been denounced by a large sector of the industry, specifically by the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, and that he was prevented from accepting that sell-out by the Danes doing what he should have been doing and asking for more?

Secondly, if the right hon. Gentleman wants the industry to give its unpressured and considered consent to

the sell-out, why does he not announce the vital aid that it needs to keep going? If withholding that announcement is not blackmail, what is?

Mr. Walker: It is unacceptable for the hon. Gentleman to talk about withholding aid when this Government's record on aid to the industry is so much better than that of any previous Government. The NFFO has had two lots of talks with me in the past 12 days and at neither was it critical of the negotiating position that I was taking.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Flint, West): Will my right hon. Friend treat the Opposition's offer of support in this matter as the dangerous booby-trapped device that it is? Will he reflect on the implications of the remarks attributed to him in *The Daily Telegraph* today that the one country that did not respect quotas was popular with its fishermen? This country has a greater interest than any other in achieving an agreed policy.

Mr. Walker: Every fishing organisation and every fisherman I have spoken to recognises that to obtain a secure future we need proper quota and enforcement arrangements in Community waters.

Mr. George Foulkes (South Ayrshire): Is there not a stark contrast between the way in which the Government moved swiftly to protect the interests of the Falkland Islanders by establishing a 200-mile exclusive zone there and the way in which they are refusing to protect the interests of my constituents and those of many other hon. Members?

Mr. Walker: I am sure that we would be willing to accept all the historic fishing rights of the Falklands to operate in our 12-mile limit.

Mr. Roger Moate (Faversham): Will my right hon. Friend clarify the situation? He has rightly asserted the importance of maintaining the agreement of the industry, and claims that he has that agreement, but the NFFO says that the proposals do not constitute the basis of an acceptable and honourable settlement. Which is correct?

Mr. Walker: The proposals that the federation was referring to were those of the Commission. I am in complete agreement with the industry about changes that we require on access, quotas and other details. The proposals that the NFFO was referring to were not proposals that I had made to the industry, but the current proposals of the Commission. My hon. Friend can check with the leaders of the NFFO. I have had discussion after discussion with them, and they do not disagree with my negotiating position.

Mr. Thomas Torney (Bradford, South): In view of the many occasions on which the right hon. Gentleman has had to come to the House and apologise for the continual procrastination of the Common Market on fishing matters, will he take unilateral action—we have waited long enough for the Common Market—and give aid to save what is left of our industry?

Mr. Walker: In fairness to the hon. Gentleman, may I say that I remember that he made similar comments from his anti-Community posture every time that we had disputes over lamb. I hope that I shall have the same success on fishing that I had on lamb.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): May I help my right hon. Friend? Is it not the case that the British

[Mr. Tony Marlow]

fishing industry has declined recently compared with the industries of some of our European partners? Would not an objective test of my right hon. Friend's success be whether that trend is reversed, particularly as we apparently own more than half the fish.

Mr. Walker: If my hon. Friend studies the matter, he will see that the decline of the British industry has been closely connected with the loss of Icelandic waters. Some improvements have occurred in the British fishing industry in coastal waters.

Mr. Hugh D. Brown (Glasgow, Provan): I recognise the merits of the right hon. Gentleman's claim about consultation with the industry and taking it with him, but is he not being a little arrogant and over-optimistic in giving almost a right of veto to an industry which is divided in its interests and, like farmers, is notoriously reluctant to accept that any Government can give it what it wants?

Mr. Walker: I had only two choices—to work closely with the industry, or not to do so. I chose to work closely with the industry.

Mr. Peter Hardy (Rother Valley): Will the right hon. Gentleman carry out a comparative study of the changes in conditions and quality of fish stock in Icelandic and British waters over the past 10 years? If he did so, would he expect to conclude that the protestations of my right hon. and hon. Friends from fishing ports are entirely justified?

On a wider note, will the right hon. Gentleman estimate whether the share of the Commission budget devoted to the structure and subsidy of agriculture will be greater next year than it was last year?

Mr. Walker: That question is not related to my statement. One of the rewards of getting a CFP is that there would then be European investment in the structure of the fishing industry.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Craigton): Why is it that on today's statement and the statement of a week or two ago the Minister has been unwilling to give us information about exactly what the Commission proposes on exclusive limits and access? Will he tell us exactly what the Commission proposes and exactly what he was apparently willing to accept on exclusive limits and access? Is it not a fact that he has been frightened to tell the House those details because he knows that the House would recognise them for what they are—a sell-out?

Mr. Walker: The right hon. Gentleman should be aware that all the documents have been made available to the House. They were passed to the Scrutiny Committee, which called for a debate on them, and I am certain that we shall have a debate on them. I have not agreed to any proposals. The right hon. Gentleman has got it totally wrong. The House has the information, and I have not agreed to anything.

Questions to Ministers

Mr. David Stoddart (Swindon): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to refer to a supplementary answer given to me yesterday by the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces. I asked:

"Is the hon. Gentleman . . . aware that there are disturbing rumours that in future RAF Kemble is to be used as a maintenance depot for cruise weapons and/or the storage of chemical weapons? Will he categorically deny these rumours?" In answer to that part of my question the hon. Gentleman said:

"In answer to the second part of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the United States Air Force is examining the available facilities and, unfortunately, has not yet been able to divulge anything to me about its intentions."—[Official Report, 29 June 1982; Vol. 26, c. 741.]

Later yesterday afternoon, in reply to a question from Harlech TV, the USAF public relations officer said that if the USAF used Kemble it would do so for general supplies:

"some of which might be used in the cruise system".

It is incredible that a Minister of the Crown, in answer to a properly tabled question, was unable or unwilling to give information which the USAF was good enough to give to the media later the same day. I believe that that was either an attempt to mislead the House or a gross contempt of the House, bearing in mind—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I can already answer the hon. Gentleman. I have been patient in allowing him to make his point, but it is not a point of order for me. The answer that a Minister gives to a question is a matter for him. It is not my responsibility and it is not a point of order on which I can rule. I have been tolerant with the hon. Gentleman and have allowed him leeway to which he was not really entitled. If he has a valid point of order, I will listen to it.

Mr. Stoddart: May I complete my point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the hon. Gentleman has a genuine point of order, I shall be glad to hear it. It is my business to rule on a genuine point of order.

Mr. Stoddart: When a Minister has clearly misled the House, Mr. Speaker I believe it is your practice to give him the opportunity to make a personal statement. I should like your advice about how, if the Minister refuses to make a personal statement, I can ask a question that is in order which will enable—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot say that the Minister has misled the House. It is the hon. Gentleman's opinion, but it might not be the Minister's. I am not involved in this.

Agriculture and Fisheries (Ministerial Meetings)

3.52 pm

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Peter Walker): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the meetings of the Council of Agriculture Ministers and of the Council of Fisheries Ministers held in Luxembourg on 14 and 15 June respectively.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State and I represented the United Kingdom at the Agriculture Council.

Agreement was reached on rules governing the approval of newly developed proteins—for example, from yeast—for use as animal feedingstuffs in the Community. The United Kingdom has a strong industrial interest in this and agreement will help our industry to exploit the technology that it has pioneered.

There was discussion of a new framework regulation on wine, but no decisions were reached on this and discussions will be continued at the next Council.

The Council discussed minimum space standards for battery hens. I emphasised that the Community legislation must provide satisfactory arrangements for ensuring uniform enforcement throughout the Community. The Council will resume its discussions on this at the next meeting.

Together with my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Minister of State, I represented the United Kingdom at the Fisheries Council.

The President of the Commission presented the Commission's proposals on total allowable catches and quotas and on access and it was agreed that these proposals would be considered at a further Council meeting on 28-29 June. In the meantime, I have arranged for consultations with our industry.

The Council reached agreement on the arrangements for enforcement of the Community rules on fishing. This provides for member States to enforce the rules in their own waters, subject to Community inspection to ensure that all countries enforce the rules effectively and impartially. The control regulation will come into force as part of a general settlement of a revised common fisheries policy or on 1 January 1983, whichever is the earlier. It is obviously essential that our fishermen can rely on the rules being enforced as effectively by other countries as they are by the United Kingdom. This agreement is a major step forward and follows the initiative that the United Kingdom took last year.

The Council also made progress on a revised conservation regulation.

Lastly, the Council agreed to authorise the continuation of payments to fishermen in respect of various market support measures. These will apply while detailed work goes ahead on the implementation of the new marketing regime.

This was a useful meeting, preparing the way for the major discussions on quotas and access at the end of the month.

Mr. Mark Hughes (Durham): I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, the Minister, and the House will sympathise with my hon. Friend the Member for Renfrewshire, West (Mr. Buchan), who cannot be present this afternoon as his wife

Mr. Biffen: There are precedents for the introduction of guillotines on constitutional Bills. I am sure that there will be more than one interpretation of the Conservative Party election manifesto commitments.

On my hon. Friend's first point, I hope that I shall be able to make further announcements about a defence debate shortly.

Mr. Clement Freud (Isle of Ely): Will the Leader of the House examine Early-Day Motion 424?

[That this House calls on Her Majesty's Government to stamp out as a matter of urgency the great and growing market in pirate video cassettes; draws attention to the fact that some 65 per cent. of video cassettes sold in the United Kingdom are now seen by this means, and that this is now a serious area of illegal activity which is having a gravely damaging effect on both the production and exhibition sides of the British film industry.]

Is he aware that the Department of Trade has published the fact that 70 per cent. of all video cassettes that are sold have been pirated? Does he agree that it would be right for the Government to make an amendment to section 21 of the Copyright Act 1956, which would be unopposed, to bring the penalty in line with other countries, rather than pursuing the laborious process of having it introduced in another place by private Members' legislation?

Mr. Biffen: The hon. Gentleman will discover that the House has recently debated that subject, thanks to the initiative of my hon. Friend the Member for Howden (Sir P. Bryan), I shall draw his comments to the attention of my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade.

Mr. John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): Now that the fighting in the Falkland Islands is over, will my right hon. Friend consider next week the best way in which the House can express its thanks for the achievement of our forces in the South Atlantic? As most people will be attending church services of thanksgiving on Sunday, will the House have an opportunity of going to a similar service at St. Margaret's?

Mr. Biffen: On my hon. Friend's second point, I do not know but I shall make immediate inquiries and let him know. On his first point, yes, the Government are now considering the matter.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Keighley): The Leader of the House said that the Prime Minister will make a statement on her return from the United Nations. When is a debate likely as there are two important items—the world disarmament campaign and the world disarmament conference—that have been adopted by the second special session on disarmament? Does he agree that they need to be debated by the House?

Secondly, on the Supply day debate, when stating their case on the vexed question of unemployment, will Government spokesmen take any account of the massive number of redundancies that are being announced by GEC in Bradford and others so that the Government can bring some pressure to bear on a massive combine to reverse that decision?

Mr. Biffen: I cannot hold out any promise for a debate on disarmament next week. More generally, in view of the pressure on parliamentary time, a debate is unlikely. On the unemployment debate, I am sure that the hon.

has been taken ill. I am sure that we all recognise that he means no disrespect to the House and that we all wish his wife a speedy recovery. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear".]

The Minister's statement covered important but narrow points on wine distillation, protein feeds and battery hens which we might examine in more detail on another occasion. We are surprised, however, that it contained no comment on the possible revaluation of the green franc and any discussion that may have taken place on that, nor on the B quota sugar levy. In view of the content of the statement and press reports on a possible fisheries agreement, however, I shall concentrate on that aspect.

Does the Minister accept that the reported 35.4 per cent. of valuable species, 30.9 per cent. of herring and an exclusive zone of only six miles are totally at variance with the oft-repeated and unanimous view of the House? Does he agree that if this were accepted it would be a sell-out of a divided, demoralised and decimated industry, the end of our deep-sea fleet, insecurity for the majority of inshore fishermen and a negation of what his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) guaranteed to the House when he negotiated Britain's entry 10 years ago?

Is the Minister aware that no improvement in enforcement procedures, however welcome, can compensate for such losses? Will he therefore undertake to hold a debate in Government time on these proposals, perhaps on the basis of early-day motion 535 on the British fishing industry signed by a number of his hon. Friends? Will he also respect the views of the House and the industry and reject the proposals as an abject surrender of British national interests?

Mr. Walker: On the last part of the hon. Gentleman's question, it is clear that he has no idea what is in the proposals. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why does not the right hon. Gentleman tell us?"] I can only repeat the assurance that I have always given to the House that no agreement will be reached which does not have the agreement of our industry. [HON. MEMBERS: "And the House."] I should be most surprised if either side of the House decided to go into the Lobbies to reject an agreement that the British fishing industry required and wanted for the future. The hon. Gentleman's entirely party political reaction is in complete contrast to that of the fishermen who were with me in Brussels this week and who will spend tomorrow at the Ministry considering the proposals quota by quota and item by item. If Labour Members have the fishing industry rather than party politics in mind, they should listen to the industry rather than making remarks of that kind.

Moreover, if I, unlike the Labour Party, deliver to the fishing industry a European agreement that it requires, it will be more important to the stability and future of our fishing industry than anything else that has been done in the past 10 years. We shall attain a negotiating position with the industry that I hope will bring it a much greater stability and better financial future than it has had in the past. The reason why I did not deal with the revaluation of the green franc was that there were no proposals about it at the Council.

Sir Marcus Kimball (Gainsborough): Is my right hon. Friend aware of the growing opinion that, unless regulations are made to ban the use of monofilament nets, both as a drift net and as a leader to a bag net, all negotiations about catches and quotas will be null and void?

Mr. Walker: I appreciate that many fishermen have strong feelings on the subject, but it does not form part of the common fisheries policy.

Mr. J. Enoch Powell (Down, South): Will the Minister understand that, if he abandons principles and requirements in the national interests that have been affirmed by the House, he cannot shelter from the consequences of doing so behind the agreement, real or alleged, enforced or cajoled, of the so-called representatives of the industry?

Mr. Walker: I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not treat the fishing industry in Northern Ireland with such disrespect as to say that it cannot advise and talk to the Government about what it considers to be its long, medium and short term interests. I hope that he is not criticising me because, unlike some of my predecessors, throughout the negotiations I have not agreed to any measure or negotiating position that has not been discussed with or agreed by the fishing industry. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will applaud that rather than decry it.

Mr. David Penhaligon (Truro): What percentage of the North Sea is in our waters? How much will it cost to monitor that and what provision do we need to expand our current capacity? Will it help to stop the Spanish fiddle in my area, because it appears to be possible that a Spanish boat with a British passenger can fish within the minimum limits that protect the Cornish fishing fleet?

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman's latter point is a legal point that is now being considered. The control measures are immensely important and mean that we shall not only have total control but that other countries will have a Commission inspectorate to ensure that they have the same standards as we have had and shall continue to have in our waters. Fishing industry representatives, especially from Cornwall, emphasised the fact that there is no point in having a common fisheries policy if it is not enforced.

Sir Peter Mills (Devon, West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that future success depends upon the policing and the enforcement of any rules and regulations that are made, especially in view of the introduction of Spain into the Community? Will he assure the House that we have adequate means to police and to control, especially in a vast area such as the South-West of England?

Mr. Walker: I agree with that, but enforcement is no good unless one is enforcing an agreement satisfactory to the British fishing industry. That is why it is important that we should negotiate adequate quotas and access arrangements to give the industry a secure future. Enforcement of inadequate quotas and access arrangements would be completely unacceptable. If we achieve the result that we require, it will be no good without proper enforcement and that is why I am delighted that the regulations adopted at the meeting were based upon a draft submitted by the British Government.

Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles): Is the Minister aware that, as some Scottish fishermen are already alleging that their leaders have been conned by the Ministry into approving the negotiations, he cannot rely on selling a package to the House on the ground that it has the approval of the fishing industry?

[Mr. Donald Stewart]

There are reports that a special deal has been made for the Orkneys and Shetlands, which I support. Why is there not a similar deal for the Western Isles, which is at least as dependent on fisheries as other areas?

Mr. Walker: I note the right hon. Gentleman's insulting remarks about the leaders of the Scottish fishing industry. Industry leaders will confirm that I have sought their advice and that I have not endeavoured to persuade them to pursue any attitude or policy towards quotas or access. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] They know that, but the right hon. Gentleman does not. I am sorry that, as with the right hon. Member for Down, South (Mr. Powell), he is insulting the views and the wisdom of the industry leaders.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): Can the Minister tell us a little more about the new enforcement measures which, on their face, seem to be even more cumbersome than in the past, which will make them more difficult to monitor? Will he be a little more forthcoming about access, because I learnt nothing from his statement about what is on the table? Can he assure the House solemnly—it may be difficult—that, whatever the proposals are, he will not make any recommendation to the fishing industry?

Mr. Walker: I assure the House that my entire view about our fishing policy is based upon the advice that I obtain from the industry as to its requirements for stocks and port by port access arrangements. Since I have been the Minister, the fishing industry has influenced me and I have always made it clear that I shall come to no agreement without discussing matters with the representatives and receiving their support. No Minister could be more fair to an industry than that. I am sorry that, when I pursue that policy, some hon. Members say that perhaps the leaders of the fishing industry are bad leaders. The best that I can do is to consult the leaders, and I have done that. The enforcement proposal put forward by us is straightforward and uncomplicated. It will enable the Commission to inspect other countries' methods, to board ships and to see all ships' documents.

Several Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Order. In order to be fair to those Members who are interested in later business, I intend to call four more hon. Members from either side.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): Will my right hon. Friend lose no opportunity to press on the Commission that illegal fishing beyond quota should not be permitted to establish a base for future quota allocations?

Mr. Walker: The problem with having no agreement is that there are no quotas. The importance of getting an agreement is that only when one has agreed quotas in a common fisheries policy can one ensure that a member country can be stopped from fishing beyond its quota.

Mr. Thomas Torney (Bradford, South): As the British fishing industry has been fading away while the Common Market has been talking, how does the Minister propose to protect the fishing industry when matters are decided in the Common Market by majority voting and the right of veto has disappeared? Will he explain that to the House?

Mr. Walker: I shall explain the hon. Gentleman's earlier statement about the decline of the fishing industry. Such decline as took place in the long-distance fleet happened before I took office. It was due to the loss of Icelandic waters and had nothing to do with the Common Market. However, the number of vessels elsewhere has increased.

Mr. Albert McQuarrie (Aberdeenshire, East): May I as a Member part of whose constituency forms one of the largest fishing communities in Europe, congratulate my right hon. Friend on the progress made towards a common fisheries policy? My right hon. Friend is right to condemn the disparaging remarks of the right hon. Members for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) and for Down, South (Mr. Powell). I am sure that the Minister will confirm that there will be no sell-out of the fishing industry and that he will continue to consult the leaders of the industry before a final common fisheries policy is effected on 1 January 1983. That will show that the disparaging remarks made in early-day motion 482 by the right hon. Member for Western Isles and hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. Wilson) are disgusting.

[That this House deplores the statement in the 'Scotsman' newspaper dated 25th May, page 8, which attributes to Mrs. Winifred Ewing, the only Scottish Nationalist Party member of the European Assembly, an accusation that Her Majesty's Government proposes a sell-out of the fishing industry in the negotiations for a renegotiated common fisheries policy, which is a typical hysterical outburst from this European Economic Community member who is not even a member of any British group in the Assembly and is completely out of touch with Her Majesty's Government's statements made on many occasions by the Prime Minister and all Fisheries Ministers that no common fisheries policy will be agreed which has not received the total support of the leaders and members of the fishing industry; and calls upon the fishing industry to treat this accusation with the contempt it deserves.]

Mr. Walker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. It would be interesting to have noted the views of the right hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) had I decided to ignore the advice of the leaders of the fishing industry because he does not approve of them. I did the opposite and consulted them throughout and I shall make sure that they are consulted to the end.

Mr. Robert MacLennan (Caithness and Sutherland): While I accept the Minister's statement that the long term stability of the fishing industry would be assisted by the ending of 10 years of uncertainty, would the Minister agree to strengthen his negotiating hand in Brussels in the next crucial round of talks by publishing the views of the industry as to what its bottom line is, and give his views so that, as on previous occasions before important negotiations, the House can endorse and whole-heartedly support the stand the Minister takes?

Mr. Walker: I cannot imagine a worse way of negotiating than to publish our bottom line requirements. In negotiations I wish to obtain all of the fish and all the priorities for British fishermen that I can. I certainly should not negotiate after having published my bottom line requirements. I assure the House that I shall consult stock by stock—as I am doing tomorrow with the fishing

industry—their priorities and what they consider important for particular ports. I shall have the most detailed assessment of what the industry requires that any Minister has ever had. I shall negotiate accordingly, and I shall have the fishing industry with me in Brussels.

Mr. Robert Hicks (Bodmin): Regarding access and fishing limits, is my right hon. Friend aware that in the far South-West—because of the fishermen's vulnerability—there are increasing anxieties following this week's meeting about their future and the ability of the inshore fishing industry to earn a living? There must be no going back on assurances given to the industry by successive Governments and the House.

Mr. Walker: I am aware of the detailed problems and requirements of the South-West. I assure the hon. Member that their requirements will be part of our negotiations before we reach a settlement.

Mr. John Prescott (Kingston upon Hull, East): The Secretary of State must accept that hon. Members representing fishing communities like Hull—where the fleets have declined from 160 to 16 ships and from 3,000 to 300 men and from ¼ million tonnes of fish to 13,000 tonnes—that their community representatives, not an agreement between the Government and industry must decide policy in the House. The difference between dominant preference, which was the policy of the House, and adequate quotas is the difference of between 60 per cent.—giving us enough fish to maintain a fishing fleet at the 1970 level—and 36 per cent. which will mean the destruction of areas like Hull. Is that being done in the name of European unity or is it a further price for the Falklands support?

Mr. Walker: As he has been a Member for Hull, the hon. Gentleman will know under whose Government the main decline in Hull took place. This Government have doubled the aid given to the fishing industry, including Hull, compared with the previous Government. I do not want lectures from the hon. Gentleman as to who has treated Hull the worse.

The hon. Gentleman knows that never in the history of British fishing has there been any question of our having 60 per cent. of the catch of European waters.

Mr. John Townend (Bridlington): The fishermen of Bridlington are grateful to my right hon. Friend and his colleagues for achieving adequate conservation measures. Is the Secretary of State satisfied that in the future there will not be the same amount of cheating as there has been by the French, the Dutch and the Danes in the past? The main requirement is still a 12-mile exclusion zone.

Mr. Walker: Yes, that is why the fishing industry was so pleased this week that we not only obtained agreement on the control regulations to ensure that enforcement took place but also agreed that, irrespective of the timing of any general common fisheries policy agreement, the control regulations will come into operation on 1 January 1983.

Mr. Austin Mitchell (Grimsby): Since the Minister is reluctant to tell us what we are negotiating about until the final settlement comes as a pleasant surprise, will he confirm the lines of settlement reported in the newspapers, which amount effectively to a six-mile exclusive zone, a six-mile dominant preference zone and a share of 35 per cent. for a nation that takes two-thirds of the fish stock to the Common Market pool? Would not a settlement along those lines betray the requirements of the House and the promises held out in the Conservative Party manifesto and the express wishes of the fishing industry? No Minister of integrity should accept such a settlement.

Mr. Walker: It is nonsense to suggest that we shall have only six miles. We have always stated that we wanted 12 miles. I have said that in agreeing to 12 miles we would have to take into account in our own and other countries interests any historic rights that existed in the six to 12-mile limit before we joined the Community. The hon. Gentleman knows that. We have always enjoyed historic fishing rights in the six to 12-mile limit around the coast of the Irish Republic. I do not believe that our fishermen would be delighted if we got rid of that. We have certain historic fishing rights in the six to 12-mile limits around France. I do not believe that our fishermen along the South coast would be pleased if that were eliminated. The pretence that we have switched to a six-mile limit is completely wrong.

European Union

Mr. Speaker: I have selected the Opposition amendment.

4.18 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Douglas Hurd): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the Document containing the latest text of the German-Italian proposals on European Union.

I want to make clear the status of the document that we are considering. The original proposals prepared by the German and Italian Foreign Ministers were submitted to the European Council in London in November 1981. The Council asked the Foreign Ministers, in collaboration with the Commission, to examine and clarify the proposals and report back to a future meeting of the European Council.

The original text of the proposals was deposited in the House, with an explanatory memorandum, on 15 January. The proposals were examined by the Scrutiny Committee, which recommended them for debate. The Belgian Presidency decided to set up a group of senior officials to examine the proposals. That group started work in January and it soon became clear that several member States had reservations about several parts of the proposals. Others needed clarification where the precise intention or meaning was not clear. Foreign Ministers asked officials to produce a revised text that took account of those points of view. That text is now before the House. It has the status of a working document and no Government are committed to it. It contains a number of passages in square brackets which show that agreement on those passages has not yet been reached. The text will be considered by Foreign Ministers at their meeting on 20 June.

For the Government: Mr. Douglas Hurd

"determined to achieve a comprehensive and coherent common political approach and reaffirming their will to transform the whole complex of relations between their States into a European Union."

Will my right hon. Friend assure the House that the Government have no intention of allowing any such settlement to come in the final document?

Mr. Hurd: I shall come to that in a very short time. I quite understand my hon. Friend's concern.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Will my right hon. Friend tell us when?

Mr. Hurd: In about five minutes if I am allowed to proceed. It is possible that agreement will be reached on a final text at Sunday's meeting. That is possible but by no means certain. We thought it right and necessary to hold the debate today so that the House can have an opportunity to express its views on the proposals as they stand before any decisions are taken upon them. If agreement is reached at the Foreign Ministers' meeting this weekend, the Presidency hopes to submit the document for approval at the next summit of the European Council on 28-29 June. However, the disagreements may be such as to prevent agreement at this stage. In that event there will be a delay.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I am grateful to the Minister for giving way so often so early in his speech. However, my intervention is important on procedural grounds. The right hon. Gentleman said that if there is an agreement, the agreed document, whatever it may end up to be, will be submitted to the next Heads of Government meeting. I understand that that is not within the treaty and is not part of the EEC's formal constitutional arrangements. As he is now telling us that it will be done at the Heads of Government meeting and will not go through the normal, proper treaty-constitutional channels of the Community to which this document clearly refers and is clearly relevant?

Mr. Hurd: This is not Community legislation. It is a political, not a legal text. Therefore, it is fitting, if sufficient progress is made, and that is by no means assured, for it to go to the next summit of the European Council at the end of the month.

It seems inevitable and right that right hon. and hon. Members should want rigorously to examine the document with a keen eye for anything that might have an effect on the interests of the United Kingdom or the rights of the House. I do not think that anything in the document justifies the language in the Opposition's amendment. I hope that that will emerge as I go through it. I have noted, of course, the amendment tabled but not called—I think that it is in order for me to refer to it—by my hon. Friend the Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop). I shall try to deal with it when I reach the passage in my speech on the European Parliament.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will study carefully the views that are expressed this afternoon before he goes to the discussion that will take place during the weekend. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) is concerned about the title referring to European union. The objective of European union derives from the preamble to the Treaty of Rome, which states that the Governments of the member States of the Community are determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe. This