

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FISHERIES

CANADA-FRANCE DISPUTE—ARREST OF CANADIAN VESSEL— DEFINITION OF “FRENCH WATERS”

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, we all know about the illegal, unlawful arrest of a Newfoundland fishing vessel yesterday by French naval vessels. The Government of France claims that it took the action because the Newfoundland boat “was fishing within the 12-mile territorial sea around St. Pierre and Miquelon”.

Fishermen were shocked this morning to hear the Secretary of State for External Affairs for Canada say: “The boat was in French waters”. Will the Minister explain to the House what he meant when he said: “The boat was in French waters”? Does he not realize that if France were to declare and enforce a 12-mile territorial sea around St. Pierre and Miquelon portions of Newfoundland would now belong to France? What does he mean by “French waters”? Are the fish also French?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, what I mean by French waters is what is defined as French waters in a treaty signed by Canada in 1972. It is a treaty signed by the Liberal Government of Canada, supported by the Hon. Member.

The question is not the 12-mile limit, the question is the application of the provisions of a Liberal treaty signed in 1972. The Hon. Member may not like what the Liberal Government did then, but that Liberal treaty set out the facts, and those facts cannot be changed now at the whim of the Hon. Member whose Party conceived the treaty, and which he supported himself.

• (1120)

CANADA'S 200-MILE ZONE—REQUEST THAT FRENCH METROPOLITAN FLEET BE ARRESTED

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, if the Government of Canada recognized that 12-mile zone, why did it not inform the fishermen?

The Government of France in enforcing a 12-mile territorial sea yesterday has virtually scuttled its claim in the so-called disputed zone. I would like to ask the Minister this. Would the Minister now not agree that the waters off the south coast of Newfoundland are no longer in dispute with this enforcement of a 12-mile territorial sea? Therefore, will the Government of Canada now, today, arrest the French metropolitan fleet which is fishing outside the 12-mile territorial sea declared by France but within Canada's 200-mile zone? The Government of France cannot have it both ways.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have to acknowledge the enthusiasm of the Hon. Member and his willingness to allow his

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enthusiasm to try to roll over the facts. I am not prepared to let him roll over the facts.

Ms. Coppins: Roll over, Joe.

Mr. Crosbie: You're good at stabbing. Go stab your Leader, boys.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Hon. Member for Hamilton East is speaking from her seat again.

Mr. Gauthier: Watch it, Joe. They were after you, too.

Mr. Tobin: He's sitting behind you, Joe.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the Right Hon. Secretary of State would answer the question.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Minister for International Trade and I stand cheek by cheek and jowl by jowl.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Explain!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The NDP has no sense of history.

Mr. Crosbie: Nor any sense of humour.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Nor any sense of the future.

Mr. Crosbie: Nor any sense, period.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate.

OVERFISHING BY FRENCH FLEET OFF SOUTH COAST OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, the Newfoundland fishermen arrested yesterday have experienced a couple of bad years in the fishery, just like every other inshore fisherman along the south coast of Newfoundland. Boats from the north coast of Newfoundland and the northeast coast of Newfoundland are now restricted off the south coast of Newfoundland because of drastic overfishing. We all know who is guilty of drastically overfishing off the south coast of Newfoundland. It is the metropolitan fleet from France.

I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs does he not realize that Canadians are fed up with this overfishing by the fleet from France, and the Government's inability to solve the problem? When is the Government going to start getting tough with the Government of France where it hurts, pull the plug on the nuclear submarine and put the brakes on the Airbus?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the negotiation is of course an important issue. I think a couple of things should be made clear.