

Oral Questions

● (1440)

[English]

FISHERIES

CANADA-FRANCE DISPUTE—OVERFISHING BY FRENCH FLEET

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, in light of the French Government quitting the negotiations over the Canada-France fishing dispute without agreeing to put the St. Pierre boundary question to international arbitration, can the Deputy Prime Minister tell the House what pressure is being put on France to prevent overfishing in 3PS? Will the Deputy Prime Minister tell us why the Government is still considering spending \$7 billion on French designed nuclear submarines when the French Government will not do the civilized thing and proposes to continue overfishing in that zone?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, at the negotiations last Friday the French again broke off negotiations because they felt that the Government was being too firm and resolute in connection with the demands that it was making with reference to fish quotas in Canadian waters. Therefore, they have broken off negotiations.

We have explained to France that, as a result, there will be no quotas for French fishing vessels on the East Coast Canadian waters next year. We are not going to go to arbitration under the Treaty of 1972 for several reasons, one of which is that since they will not go to arbitration on the question of the boundaries between St. Pierre and Miquelon and Canada, no one can say with finality what are Canadian waters. In addition, France's actions have been so unreasonable that it is making the 1972 Treaty unworkable.

The House can be assured that we are taking a firm and resolute position that the French now certainly understand, and that there will be no give-away that is not absolutely necessary and reasonable in order to settle this situation.

With respect to the question of nuclear submarines, no decision has been made, and it is certainly unrelated to the present controversy.

CANADIAN COD STOCK

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, the Government has attempted the "carrot" approach by offering northern cod. That has not worked. The difficulty that we have is with 3PS and the threat by France to overfish that stock to the detriment of fishermen on the south coast of Newfoundland.

I wish to know what the Government will do about that situation? Will it put pressure on the French Government to prevent that stock from being depleted, and how will it do that?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): It was suggested by the Hon. Member's foreign affairs critic—one of

the Rambos in the NDP Party—that armed force be used in this situation, and the Leader of the NDP seemed to support that particular Rambo suggestion several months ago.

We are dealing with France in the following manner. We are taking a firm position. We have told them that there will be no quotas next year at all unless they are prepared to come back and discuss this matter reasonably. That is putting tremendous pressure on France because, in addition to the French fishing fleet, the fishermen of St. Pierre and Miquelon will not have access to the Gulf of St. Lawrence or any other Canadian waters.

What other types of pressure may be needed, I do not know. This is certainly very firm pressure upon France which we hope will bring them back to the bargaining table in a reasonable frame of mind.

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES AGREEMENT—PROVINCIAL APPROVAL

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The free trade strategy of the Government has been characterized by contradiction, confusion, and confabulation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: Last Friday we saw the mess that was wrought by its introduction of Bill C-22.

I wish to ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he agrees with his Minister for International Trade on another issue relating to the free trade talks when she states that no provincial approval is necessary, or whether the Deputy Prime Minister agrees with the position taken by the United States trade representative that no deal will go forward without provincial approval?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, first, perhaps it would be appropriate for Ambassador Yeutter to concentrate his efforts on selling this very important free trade package to Americans, and particularly to the Congress, rather than engaging in concerning himself with the Canadian situation.

The position of the Government is that this is a deal that has been negotiated, it is good for Canada, it is a balanced package, and it is good for all regions of the country. We believe that given the fact that the Premiers have been involved—and I should say in passing that reference has been made to the fact that the Premiers were not involved in the energy discussions, and that is simply untrue; I am informed that energy was brought up on various occasions; the Premiers were fully briefed on the energy situation,—we believe that we