

Oral Questions

With regard to the other part of the question, I know something about NDP marriage proposals and we have no interest in them at all.

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FISHERIES

MINISTER'S LETTER TO ST. MALO OFFICIAL

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been wondering why the French metropolitan fleet is being given fishing quotas in Canadian waters after its treaties ran out last year. We now learn that not even the French in France believed they had any rights to Canadian waters when their treaties expired last year. Why did the Secretary of State for External Affairs write on February 14 of last year to the Assistant Delegated to Maritime Affairs, City of St. Malo, France, saying:

—the Prime Minister asked me to thank you for your letter of December 23, 1985, in which you made known to him your concerns about the rights to fish by French vessels, and especially those from St. Malo, in Canadian waters.

—Canada has not abandoned the people of St. Malo—these people will be able to continue to fish Canadian waters in 1986 and well beyond that.

Why did the Minister write that when the French did not even know they had fishing rights here until his letter of February 14? Did he get carried away on Valentine's Day?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is a shame that an Hon. Member with such dramatic talents would not apply them to reading the whole letter instead of simply part of it. If he read the whole letter he would see that the letter makes reference to the 1972 agreement. It says: "It is by virtue of that 1972 agreement that the French metropolitan trawlers will fish in future in Canadian waters". That 1972 agreement is known otherwise as the "Liberal Government agreement".

Mr. Baker: It is nice to know that this Government is now educating the people of France that they can fish forever in Canadian waters. The letter did not go to St. Peter's in Prince Edward Island, St. Andrews in New Brunswick, St. Ann's in Nova Scotia, or St. Anthony in Newfoundland; it went to St. Malo in France.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Under what legislative legal authority did the Secretary of State for External Affairs guarantee fish to France in this letter of February 14 when he says: "Oh, we won't forsake the people of St. Malo"? It sounds like he is running an election campaign in France. Joe Blow for St. Malo!

[Translation]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): In France, they say: "Joe Qui?"

[English]

The facts are that the Liberal Government in 1972 signed a treaty which gave fishing rights to France. That was a Liberal treaty. I was sent a letter by a citizen of France. I replied to that letter. My habit when I am replying to letters from people anywhere in the world is to tell them the truth. I do not know what the habit of the Liberal Party is.

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● (1440)

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—U.S. DOCUMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In reply to a question just a moment ago the Secretary of State for External Affairs flatly contradicted an official U.S. document.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: As the Minister will realize—

An Hon. Member: But we are a sovereign country!

Mr. Broadbent: As the Minister will realize, it is no joking matter for the Government of Canada to say one thing and the Government of the United States to say another about what both see as historically important trade negotiations.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I will wait until Members opposite quiet down.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Andre: Next question!

Mr. Speaker: The Chair recognizes the Hon. Member for Oshawa. I would ask that Hon. Members give proper attention.

Mr. Broadbent: I will now read to the Secretary of State for External Affairs what the official U.S. document says and ask him if it is the truth or not. In this document it states:

The role of Canadian Wheat Board and other Canadian marketing boards will be discussed during the bilateral Free Trade Agreements—negotiations.

That is the official U.S. policy. Is it true or not?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the only thing that would shock the United States administration more than having the Leader of the NDP acting as its spokesman in the House of Commons would be if the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition were to do it again.