

## S.O. 29

It is misleading to suggest that it has been a simple process or that there are simple solutions to this problem which has evolved over the centuries. It is an insult to the intelligence of the people of Canada, and particularly the people of Atlantic Canada, to suggest that there is a simple solution, a specific action which can be taken to right the problems which accumulated throughout centuries in relation to the Atlantic Canada fishery. Anyone who has dealt with this issue over any period of time knows that it is a long and difficult process to obtain for Canada complete control of the 200-mile economic zone in Atlantic Canada. That is the ultimate goal. However, people should not be so anxious. It has taken 500 years to get to this point. We cannot overcome those centuries of activity in a decade or two.

When the Liberal Party was in power in Canada it made, at best, slow progress toward attaining total control of the economic zone. We are taking new steps in the process to gain the ultimate goal of total control. In that connection we must recognize that various European countries, particularly Spain, Portugal and France, have fished in Atlantic waters. That must be overcome over a period of time. Some of the specific problems have been dealt with, but the right of France to fish in Atlantic waters has not been overcome.

Particular difficulty arises from the presence of St. Pierre and Miquelon in what would otherwise be our national waters. Everyone involved in the Atlantic fishery knows of the existence of St. Pierre and Miquelon and of the traditional rights of the French to fish in Atlantic waters. The problem is what to do about it. How can the problem be resolved? How can we put in place a mechanism to deal with the problem? We are trying to eliminate the mischief of the rights of four nations to fish in Atlantic waters. In relation to France, that is only one part of the problem.

Those who would make more of it than only an evolution of the problem which has existed for centuries, which has been particularly prominent in the last four or five decades, are not being fair with the people of Canada. They know that there is and has been a problem and that it must be resolved. The question is how to do that. I defy anybody in this House or in Atlantic Canada to deny that there is a problem with regard to foreign intervention in the Atlantic fishery.

The Government of Canada has proceeded on the course of resolution of the problem. To disagree with the specifics of how the Government of Canada has attempted to resolve the problem is only to quarrel with relatively minor details. One must agree that the problem must be resolved in a manner which solicits the concurrence of the international community. It cannot be resolved by unilateral action.

That raises the matter of gunboats. We know that that kind of unilateral action has never in the history of the world resolved any problem. It is very clear, based on the history of Atlantic Canada and its fishery, that there is a problem with respect to foreign participation in the Atlantic fishery. There is a very specific problem with regard to the participation of France in the Atlantic fishery which, in turn, is related to the

existence of St. Pierre and Miquelon as a French territory. Everyone recognizes that that is a problem in connection with the traditional fishing activity of France in Atlantic Canada over the centuries.

• (0140)

That problem must be resolved and it is ridiculous for anyone to suggest otherwise. The question is: how does one resolve it? I have yet to hear anyone suggest in the House a way to resolve the problem. I am sure the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) would be amenable to any suggestion from any Member of the House who could tell the Minister how to resolve the problem in a manner that did not involve any concessions on the Atlantic fish stock. No one has made that suggestion, apart from blowing them out of the water. Anyone who has taken that kind of approach has been sunk himself. We know that this is not a solution.

The Government of Canada, following the precedents of international negotiations in the last decade or more, has arrived at what it believes, through the Minister of Fisheries, is a step toward a resolution of the problem. Let the person who has a better solution to the problem come forward and resolve it in another way. However, they must be prepared to take the risk of failure of the solution. That is a risk that falls to us as members of the Government, supporting the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. We recognize that we must take the risk of the failure of the solution that has been proposed. That is the lot of those who govern. However, it is not the lot of those in opposition to take the risk of failure of the solutions that they may propose as alternatives. In short, it means nothing for someone in opposition to say that we should take another course of action than that which we propose. They take no responsibility.

The Minister and the Government have recognized that there is a problem with respect to the Atlantic fishery in relation to the participation of the French in that fishery. A solution has been proposed and the Government of Canada is prepared to take the risk of the failure of that solution. What more can one ask of the Government? I rise in support of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, who has at least proposed a solution to a problem that has existed for more than 500 years and has been present in Atlantic Canada since the very foundation of this country in 1867. It has come to prominence in the decade or more since the establishment of the economic zone.

The case, simply stated, is that there is a problem and the Government of Canada has proposed a solution. It has done so in good faith, to the best of its ability, and the Government is prepared to take the risk of failure of that solution.

Let me conclude by simply dealing with those who would argue that this is not a good solution. I repeat emphatically that no one has proposed another solution. Those of us who were elected by the people of Atlantic Canada have an important duty to represent the best interests of Atlantic Canada and make certain that the interests of the people of