

*Supply*

in their constituencies. He has the opportunity to speak directly to the people in Newfoundland and express his own outrage at what has happened and mobilize their support for strong action from the Government.

In his stead, I and my colleagues recognize firmly our obligation to speak for the people of Newfoundland and the people of Canada in putting pressure on the Government to do the right thing to arrive at a resolution of this matter.

In this respect, I am thinking of the Ministry and its members. The Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) spoke before Question Period to express himself strongly on behalf of Newfoundlanders. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) just spoke and expressed the strong feelings of the Canadian Government.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), who surely has a central role in such questions of relations with other countries which involve the very boundaries of the Canadian nation, has not spoken. He was here in Question Period, quite naturally receiving the shots of one Member after another pressing him to take action to bring this dispute to a proper resolution.

I want to focus for a few moments on the actions of the Secretary of State for External Affairs since our condemnation is of the lack of success and action of the Government.

It is worth considering what the Secretary of State for External Affairs does in situations like this in other parts of the world. I am not specifically referring to boundary disputes, but the way in which he grapples with difficulties and disputes of whatever sort. Canadians were struck—some pleased, some outraged—by the strong stand the Secretary of State for External Affairs took in regard to the Israeli occupation of the territories it seized in earlier wars, where the Palestinian population has been protesting against the occupation for some months.

I note only the fact that he spoke very firmly. If there was any sense that the Canadian tradition was one of quiet diplomacy behind the scenes, when he spoke that particular day to the Canadian Israeli community there was not very much evidence of quiet diplomacy to be seen.

● (1340)

It was not the only time that the Secretary of State for External Affairs spoke out in such a firm way. I think of his strong statements about Canadians of the Sikh faith who belong to certain organizations when he sent a letter to a number of Premiers urging them to have nothing to do with a certain number of organizations. He took a very, very strong stand. Some people saw this as a response to the pressure of the Government of India and to those who were concerned about trade. They saw this as yielding to another Government. I would not want to draw a final conclusion on that.

At least once in this House some months ago questions were raised regarding the treatment of a Canadian who was from south Asia who was imprisoned in India, whether justifiably or not. We know that the Draconian laws of detention now in effect in the Republic of India allow persons to be held for two years without any charge. The person can then be brought to court and the charge can be renewed for another two years. This detention is in utter disregard for that long-standing principle of habeas corpus that we all value so much which came out of the development of English law. To the credit of the Secretary of State, he recognized the harshness of the treatment of this person. He said quite clearly in the House in Question Period that this was not behaviour that the Government of Canada approved of. I was sufficiently impressed that I went over to him to discuss whether or not this was the first time perhaps that a Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs had spoken so firmly about a sister nation of the Commonwealth in being critical of some actions that it took.

The pros and cons of these various cases can be debated. However, I do not see any strong action. I know, to the credit of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the kind of position he has generally taken in Central America. But there I want to begin modifying the picture. We well know that he has been challenged in the House. He was challenged by my friend, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie). He was challenged to speak some words of condemnation, particularly of the United States which has been pressing against the sovereign state in Central America and against the Nicaraguan people. The Secretary of State for External Affairs refused to do that. There those old traditions of quiet diplomacy came to the fore.

I suggest that whatever may happen in some places far from Canada dealing with countries that have limited impact on Canada, the Secretary of State is prepared to be forceful and firm. However, when it comes to dealings with France and an attempt to resolve this long-standing difficulty involving fishing rights based on the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, he has been with his Government a Government that has certainly been equivocal at various times. He has not followed a straightforward and consistent policy that might bring this whole dispute to a resolution.

The Minister of Fisheries spoke a few minutes ago. At one point in his comments he indulged in a certain amount of rhetoric. In fact, he indulged in a little hyperbole about Newfoundland, that glorious rock, and then drew into it the great domain of Canada and how the fishing rights of these little islands could be put up against the fishing rights of the Canadian people. There is, of course, a danger in that rhetoric.

The Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon have remained a French possession from the days of the French regime precisely because of the fishery. Anyone who goes back to the peace negotiations that ended the Seven Years War in the early 1760s, more than 200 years ago, knows perfectly well that France held on to these islands as a way of maintaining its part of the fishery on the gulf and beyond. The fishery of