France's view of the south coast of Newfoundland implies that Canada ought to close most of the villages there and shift to an industrial fishery that operates from other ports and is no longer tied to the 3Ps fishing grounds. The effect would be the depopulation of the entire south coast, a region many times larger than St. Pierre and Miquelon. I am not certain that this would be good policy in conservation terms or even in economic terms. But I am certain that it is neither good human policy nor the policy of the Government of Canada. Above all, it is not equity.

The transformation France works in dealing with geography and economics is startling enough. But it is overshadowed by the sea change France brings to the law. This is not surprising, given that the law as it stands is in flat contradiction with the French thesis in this case.

France's approach to the law is well illustrated in the treatment of the sources of the law in the French countermemorial. There France begins by reminding us that the jurisprudence makes a precious contribution to maritime boundary law. That contribution, we are told, is all the more precious in that judges base themselves on legal principles in their boundary decisions, whereas states do so more rarely in their boundary agreements.

So far, so good. But we have heard only the first half of France's doctrine on the sources of the law. In the present case, France goes on to argue, the precious contribution of the jurisprudence can be of little help, because none of the earlier cases concerned a situation identical to this one. State practice, on the other hand, has something to teach us because France considers that certain delimitation agreements strongly resemble the present case. The message is clear. When faced with a jurisprudence that defies France at every turn, the French reaction is simple and direct: Get rid of it. As Verlaine might have said, *prends la jurisprudence et tords-lui le cou*.

Mr. President, distinguished Members of the Court, all of this simply amounts to saying that there is no maritime boundary law applicable to the present case. State practice, we are told, may be relevant. But how are we to know when it is relevant? How are we to know that a delimitation agreement is based on legal principles, if we have only state practice to judge by and no objective legal principles to guide us? If the jurisprudence is dismissed, we are left only with the delimitation provisions of the 1958 Convention on the Continental Shelf and of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. The first are not applicable in the present case, and the second do not help us out of the legal vacuum created by France.