

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNIVERSAL
POSTAL UNION

Mr. Speaker: Before continuing with the question period, may I call to the attention of all hon. members the presence in our gallery of a distinguished visitor who is on an official visit, the Director-General of the Universal Postal Union, Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Sobhi.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CANADA-U.S. FISHERIES AGREEMENT—CONSULTATION WITH
NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Last Friday, Canada declared that the 1978 interim reciprocal fishing agreement between Canada and the United States would not be implemented by Canada.

Is the Prime Minister aware that the government of the province of Newfoundland, where 90 per cent of its fish exports go to the U.S. and where 20 per cent of the work force are either fishermen or engaged in the fish processing industry—the province most dependent on fishing, economically—was not given any notice by anybody in the Canadian government that this action was going to be taken, neither the minister of fisheries, the premier nor any official? They received no notice. They were not consulted, nor were they asked for their opinion. Will the Prime Minister see that such conduct, which endangers the whole fabric of federal-provincial relations in this country, will not occur again?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if I may answer the question of the hon. member, he may be formally correct in saying that there were no direct contacts with the government of Newfoundland on this particular action, but it was for a very obvious reason: Newfoundland fishermen and the Newfoundland fishing industry were not directly involved in the boundary question on either the Georges Bank or the west coast.

However, in terms of keeping the Newfoundland government advised, I can assure the hon. member that on all of the discussions concerning our relations with the United States and also, incidentally—and perhaps of more importance to the hon. member—on the matter involving the boundary question of St. Pierre and Miquelon there has been a whole series of meetings with the Newfoundland government and it is my intention to have still more, probably within the next few days.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, is the Secretary of State for External Affairs aware that the Premier of Newfoundland and the minister of fisheries of Newfoundland have confirmed that they were not informed nor consulted on this step which will affect Newfoundland if the United States takes any retaliatory

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action? It will certainly affect Newfoundland in its fish exports to the U.S.

Is he also aware that the U.S. treasury department is soon going to rule on whether countervailing duties are going to be imposed on \$200 million worth of fish imported into the U.S. from Canada because of Canadian assistance programs and, as a matter of fact, is the minister aware that there is a very strong possibility that tomorrow the United States is going to rule that there will be a countervailing duty on cod blocks exported from Newfoundland? This being the case, and the fact that this action coincides with the minister's action, does the minister agree that the Newfoundland government must be consulted on a program such as this, and a joint program of action developed? Is the minister aware of that—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Crosbie:—and will steps be taken to prevent this kind of thing?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, of course I am aware of it. I want to admonish the hon. member, as I have done in the House in the past, to please—if he does not have any concern for the government, he should for his fellow Newfoundland fishermen—keep as much distance as he possibly can between the boundary issue and the question of tariffs.

I have made efforts, with the support of hon. members on the opposite side, to avoid the necessity of bringing these two issues into some conjunction so that there appears to be a connection between them. It is of the utmost importance that it not be seen that this boundary dispute in any way reflects on any tariff issues which may be between Canada and the United States. I again express my appreciation for the fact that in public discussion in the committee meeting of two nights ago, this issue was not raised; and I understand why it was not raised.

In so far as Newfoundland and consultations are concerned, on the narrow point about the boundary, the hon. member is correct; I did not talk to the Premier of Newfoundland about that particular point. I did not do so for the very reason I am speaking about now, namely, that I did not want to tie the boundary question and the tariff question, and Premier Moores has had no direct interest in the boundary question.

I said to the hon. member in the House a few days ago, when he raised this matter, that I was aware that there was a different issue, which has been long-standing for several months, on the question of tariffs. I am in the process this day of having discussions and negotiations about this situation. I spoke with the Secretary of State of the United States at 6.15 last evening and made it clear to him that there was no relationship between the two questions, and I had confirmation from him that he would do his best to separate the two. If the hon. member is really concerned about Newfoundland and the Newfoundland fishermen as much as I am, he will stop trying to make this connection.