

I see my time is fast running out, Mr. Speaker. I will conclude by saying that the people of Canada are now looking at what the Government of Canada is going to do. The fishermen of Canada are totally fed up with the inaction of the Government. They are wondering what happened since 1984. What happened to cause the Government of France to announce unilaterally enormous quotas out to 200 miles in the so-called disputed zone, and to send over gigantic factory freezer trawlers to catch that fish?

The Government of Canada also approved licences for Canadian factory freezer trawlers. The Newfoundland Government approved the inshore middle distance fleet of over 100 foot boats, and 20,000 inshore fishermen with little boats were looking and saying: "What is going on? We have been forsaken by the Government of Canada. We have been forsaken by the Government of Newfoundland. Who speaks for the inshore fishermen today in Atlantic Canada?" They are poor people, Mr. Speaker, who contribute more to this economy than people in St. John's in the Government, or in any other Government.

We are now awaiting the response of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie). Today these Ministers were quoted in the media as saying that this Canadian boat yesterday "was arrested in French waters". In French waters! Were the fish they were catching French fish? What is going on here? Our cabinet Ministers say for all of Canada to hear "These are French waters". Even the ordinary fishermen of eastern Canada know that we have had what is called mutual forbearance, if one wants to talk in legal terms, for 200 years. That means there are no lines drawn. Yesterday little fishing boats from St. Pierre were fishing on the shoreline of Newfoundland. If one wanted to extend a 12-mile zone around St. Pierre, one would be seizing a portion of Newfoundland. In some places it is not 12 miles away from St. Pierre.

It is the craziest, most ridiculous thing that I have ever seen sent to the Government of Canada by the Government of France yesterday afternoon at 3 p.m. It stated that the fishing boat was violating the 12-mile territorial sea around the nation of France off the east coast of Canada.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, what was the response of the Government of Canada? When it was informed of this just at the time the rope was being put on the boat, the Government asked the RCMP to phone the wives and the families of the crew members to tell them what was happening. At 7 p.m. last night the RCMP officers said: "They will be arrested when they arrive on shore in St. Pierre; they are being towed into port by a French naval vessel. We were asked to pass that along to you. It will take three hours to tow them into port". That, Mr. Speaker, was the sole and only response of Members of the Government of Canada to the declaration by the Government of France. They did not even object to the Government of France. They sat in their offices here in Ottawa and held meetings. They sat in their offices and asked:

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"What's the most recent report from the Coast Guard and the RCMP helicopter?" They did one further thing, Mr. Speaker. They gave orders that the honorary Consul General in St. Pierre should be on the wharf at 7 p.m. and report on the condition of the crew members.

Mr. Tobin: What a pile of wimps. All the backbone of a jellyfish.

Mr. Foster: Send in Joe.

Mr. Baker: As I say, Mr. Speaker, it all goes back to letters written by the Secretary of State for External Affairs on behalf of the Prime Minister who wants to be known around the world as somebody who wants to be loved and needs to be loved by everybody. The Secretary of State for External Affairs put it in writing. "We will not forsake the people. We will not abandon the people of St. Malo". No, Mr. Speaker, they did not abandon the people St. Malo, but they have abandoned the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: That was a fine, dramatic performance, Mr. Speaker, which accomplished nothing. Nevertheless, we may as well try to elucidate a fact or two while the hon. gentleman is present. I have a couple of questions. For example, I want to know whether the Hon. Member realizes—

Mr. Tobin: You have questions for us? You have more nerve than a toothache.

Mr. Crosbie: I just want to expose the depths of their ignorance, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Hon. Member if he realizes that it was in December, 1971, that the Government of Canada recognized a 12-mile limit for France around St. Pierre and Miquelon. Does the Hon. Member realize that France proclaimed this 12-mile territorial limit around St. Pierre and Miquelon in 1971, and that Canada never objected. The then Liberal Government did not object in 1971. It did not object in 1972, 1973, 1974, nor did it object in 1975, 1976, 1977, or 1978, Mr. Speaker. All those years it never objected. It did not object in 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, or 1984.

Mr. Tobin: And they didn't arrest us in all those years.

Mr. Crosbie: So, if Canada has recognized that France has a 12-mile limit around St. Pierre and Miquelon, and that these are territorial waters of France, the Liberal Government of Canada recognized that from 1971 until it was turned out of office in 1984. It appears that the Newfoundland vessel taken in tow yesterday and under the control of St. Pierre and Miquelon was within a 12-mile zone. It is not in the area known as the disputed part of 3PS.

● (1030)

I am wondering whether the Hon. Member knows that, or whether he simply conveniently forgets the fact that there is a 12-mile territorial limit around St. Pierre and Miquelon, a