

Oral Questions

elements of the agreement that I announced yesterday. We have not offered any additional 15,000 tonnes of cod. In fact these amounts, which are provided for in the long-term agreement with France and the EEC, and as well the allocation in the 3PS area, are contained within the fishing plan which was announced last year, fully discussed and negotiated with representatives of the industry and the Governments of Newfoundland and the other Atlantic Provinces.

• (1420)

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That is not what the fishermen are saying, or the Premier of Newfoundland. What the Minister has done is offered this gift to France in order to maintain cordial relations, so called, so that cabinet Ministers can continue to enjoy the cocktail circuit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

REASON FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Why would the Minister cut the Atlantic quota for Canadians by 10,000 metric tonnes and issue those licences to Frenchmen for 15,000?

Mr. Foster: Shame.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): The answer to that, too, Mr. Speaker, is very simple. In fact those licences were only issued so we could keep track of how many French vessels were blatantly overfishing—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Siddon:—in a disputed zone under provisions approved by the Government of which the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition was a part and which he endorsed as Prime Minister when he was Prime Minister for a short while.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Minister cannot substantiate that one whit.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): I am going to try to make some sense out of this. I am going to go to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Johnston: Good luck.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to try to get together with us and look at what has happened here? The French Government is claiming in effect the Gulf of St. Lawrence. That is like us claiming the Eiffel Tower. Yet the Government has authorized an adjudication before the World Court, sacrificing our sovereignty and the rights of our fishermen. Will the Deputy Prime Minister

not overrule the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and pull us out of this absurd deal with France?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has asked three questions and made three incorrect statements, which shows how ill-equipped he would be to lead a Government of this country.

An Hon. Member: He has already proved that in the past.

Mr. Siddon: Absolutely, and we will prove it, too.

Mr. McKenzie: We saw what he did in Finance.

Mr. Siddon: The Leader of the Opposition has claimed that France—

Mr. Penner: Get rid of this Minister. He is a disaster.

Mr. Siddon:—lays claim to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. That is pure poppycock. It is not the case. In fact what we are doing by entering into a period of negotiation with France is to find for once and for all a solution to a problem created by a Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was a part.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MINISTER AND PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, that answer was amusing coming from a Minister who would obviously have trouble walking and chewing gum at the same time.

Atlantic Canadians and, specifically, Newfoundlanders, have been brutally sold out by this Minister, whom they will never again trust. The Minister was sworn to uphold their interests. Why did the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans write to the Prime Minister on June 24, 1986, with respect to these negotiations and say:

I want to assure you that my goal throughout will be to manage our fisheries discussions with the French in a manner that does not jeopardize the cordial relationship between Canada and France—

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Shame!

Mr. Tobin: Who was putting pressure on the Minister to go easy with France and brutalize Newfoundlanders?

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Shame!

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): You know, Mr. Speaker, as is usual with members of the Opposition, they love to take quotes out of context. If the Hon. Member would wish to read the entire text—

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): We will table the whole letter, don't worry.

Mr. Siddon:—he would realize that the Prime Minister said:

Your comments on the socio-economic importance of the cod fishery and the implications of the French claim are useful. I agree that in dealing with this