

Oral Questions

man is not seriously concerned about the problem. He is only concerned about trying to score political points.

Mr. Tobin: I am dammed concerned. I am fed up.

Mr. Speaker: It is not very often the Speaker would make a comment on an exchange, but the debate last night showed very clearly that members on both sides of this House are very deeply concerned about it. I do not think we are advancing Question Period by getting into that debate. The hon. member.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The EEC announced today that it is going to take tens of thousands of tonnes of northern cod when NAFO allocated them a zero quota.

Amid all of the misery of plants closing in eastern Canada, along comes this incredible example of the mixed up priorities of this government in dealing with the EEC.

I want to ask a question of the minister of fisheries. Will cabinet now cancel a remission order registered three weeks ago giving France back \$500,000 for its fishing vessel licence fees in 1987? Is this how the government is going to get rid of foreigners overfishing—kill them with kindness?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member who called my office knows the answer to that question.

The answer is that this government eliminated the French Metropolitan fleet from fishing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1987 and this government saved 17,000 metric tonnes of codfish for our own fishermen. Therefore, we sent a reduced invoice to France because we could not charge them fishing licence fees for fish it never caught because they were caught by Canadians.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, you know that in 1987 France overfished its quota on the east coast of Canada by five times. This government is behaving like a bunch of masochists, paying France a half a million dollars to kick us in the *derrière*.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Hon. Member to put his question, please.

[*English*]

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, when France has now announced that it is going to take northern cod outside the 200-mile zone, why is this country giving to France inside our 200-mile zone a quota of northern cod for 1990 to keep the fish plants going in St. Malo, France? Why candy for the EEC and a lump of coal for Canada? *Pourquoi, le Père Noël, envers La France, et "Miser" Grinch au Canada?*

Mr. Mulroney: That's a ten.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I certainly cannot match the hon. member in bilingual talent.

I want to tell the House, however, that in connection with this problem and the way in which the European community is approaching it, Ambassador Beesley on our behalf called in today the chargé d'affaires of the European community to express the objections of the government to these decisions by the European community.

The Prime Minister is in the process of sending a telegram to President Mitterrand of France who is the chairman of the European community at the present time. The Prime Minister will be continuing his active involvement in this issue by taking the matter up with President Delors at the top of the agenda when President Delors of the European community visits Canada this year.

The government deplores this action taken by the European community which although some improvement over last year with respect to the northern cod is adding salt to our wounds and adding insult to injury with respect to the need for conservation of the northern cod.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Last night when he, the Minister for International Trade and the Secretary of State for External Affairs got up and talked about their success in negotiating and discussing with the European Common Market, they knew that that same community had already decided to have a quota four times what Canada was asking. Why did they deliberately mislead the people of Atlantic Canada?