

Oral Questions

[English]

FISHERIES

OVERFISHING BY FRENCH VESSELS—REQUEST FOR TRADE SANCTIONS

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The Minister of Transport said that Canada will do whatever is within its power to stop French overfishing in the disputed 3PS zone south of Newfoundland. So far we have seen nothing but meaningless gestures. When is Canada going to get serious about stopping the French destruction of our Atlantic fisheries? When will it take action that will get the French to the negotiating table? Is the Government now prepared to begin a process of progressive sanctions against French products, beginning with such items as mineral water and moving on to more serious ones?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the Hon. Member has been all these weeks. He is calling for action on a long unresolved problem that this Government did not create, which has to do with the fact that France believes that a treaty signed in 1972 entitles it to certain fishing rights in Canadian waters. That is what led the Government to enter into a process of negotiating an agreement which would refer to international arbitration the boundary issue south of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and a second agreement which would set quotas and administer fishing arrangements during the time it takes to solve that boundary problem once and for all. These are initiatives the Government is taking.

I would like to know if the Hon. Member is suggesting that we cut off all other forms of trade with France. Is that what the Hon. Member is suggesting?

GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the Government should place fisheries at least as high in its priorities as does the French Government. Do the Minister and the Government really believe that the puny actions they have taken so far will be effective in preventing the French from overfishing in 3PS? When it finds out that these actions are successful, is it prepared to take stronger action up to and including sanctions against French products?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, in the style of his Leader I hear the Hon. Member suggesting that Canada mount a physical confrontation with France. That may be one way to gain some attention when a Party is seeking to win a few meagre votes in a by-election, but it is absolutely irresponsible.

WAR CRIMINALS

AMENDMENT OF CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. It concerns the Deschênes Commission Report. I wish to commend the Government for its resolve to address this issue, particularly the balanced and sensitive way in which the Minister addressed it, and the made-in-Canada solution.

The Minister indicated that while the commission found the size of the problem of war criminals to be substantially less than indicated by some, the Government must be concerned if even one individual guilty of war crimes has sought refuge from justice in Canada. The next step is to amend the Criminal Code. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice how quickly we can expect that amendment or that process to take place.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the question of the Hon. Member who has had substantial interest in this important issue. I wish to thank him publicly for the input which he has given to me with respect to the response of the Government.

The Hon. Member points out the fact that we have some work to do on the floor of the House of Commons. It is my intention to make a priority issue in my Department the bringing forward of amendments to the Criminal Code at the earliest possible date. I am gratified by the response of the opposition Parties and by Canadians generally. I know that we will have co-operation in getting these amendments through the House at the earliest possible date.

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REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

SYDNEY STEEL CORPORATION—MODERNIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. He will know that in July of 1984 the Prime Minister committed himself and his Party to the second phase of the modernization program of Sydney Steel. The people in my region had to wait for 20 months before a subsidiary agreement was signed with Nova Scotia in February of 1986. Another 12 months have now elapsed only for us to find out from the Minister in March of 1987 that they have to wait for a business plan. Why should the people of my region trust the Government in view of the fact that this matter has been delayed for such an unconscionable period of time?

• (1500)

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the people in my friend's riding should trust this Government because we are doing much more