

Oral Questions

should know, to send patrol vessels out to patrol the disputed waters in 3PS, or to accompany its fishing fleet. There is nothing strange or startling about that. We certainly do not regard it as a provocation; the same as there is no provocation when Canada sends its own vessels out to accompany our own fishing vessels, or to perform whatever services they perform. There is no provocation here, nor is any provocation meant, nor do we take it to be a provocation.

Ms. Copps: We don't believe you one jot.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF JAPANESE PARLIAMENTARIAN, MR. HIROSHI OHKI

Mr. Speaker: I hope the Hon. Member will forgive the Speaker for interrupting his lead question. However, we have a distinguished guest here who must leave shortly.

I wish to draw to the attention of Hon. Members the presence in the gallery of Mr. Hiroshi Ohki, Chairman of the Commerce and Industry Committee of the Upper House of the Diet of Japan and Member of the House of Councillors.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FISHERIES

CANADA-FRANCE DISPUTE—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

Last month the Prime Minister of France, Jacques Chirac, announced that French fishermen will now illegally take at least 36,000 tonnes of fish in Canadian waters, and that French fishermen will operate, to use his words, "under the best possible security conditions".

When asked about it by the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of Transport stated, with respect to Prime Minister Chirac, that there has been no threat from the Prime Minister of France.

In light of the news today that a French naval vessel for the first time in history will permanently be deployed off the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, in light of the French Prime Minister's statement that France will take 36,000 tonnes of fish illegally under the best possible security conditions, when will the Minister of Transport wake up and realize that Canada is being turned into an international wimp? Will he wait until his home in St. John's West has been

claimed by France as part of St. Pierre and Miquelon's 200-mile limit, or will he act now?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, where is the Member for Gander—Twillingate when he is needed? I regret very much that he is not here today to make something out of this piece of froth and puffery that the hon. gentleman is huffing and puffing about.

Ms. Copps: Some sovereignty.

Mr. Crosbie: I might point out that at no time has the French Prime Minister stated that France will take 36,000 tonnes of fish or cod in the disputed zone this year. He has never stated that. The Hon. Member opposite cannot show that having been stated by the Prime Minister. It is a figment of his imagination, or a piece of conjuring by him.

The Hon. Member's Government, when he was a member here of the previous Government, entered into an agreement with France where we both agreed that in the disputed waters—

Ms. Copps: Not one tittle, not one jot.

Mr. Crosbie: The hon. lady can squeal as much as she likes, but it will not change the situation *vis-à-vis* France. It is not frightened by her interjections, and neither am I.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: The hon. gentleman's Government entered into an agreement with France wherein we both agreed that we would not interfere with the vessels of the other in the disputed waters, or board those vessels, or otherwise accost them. That agreement is still in effect.

I do not know where this appellation of wimp comes in, Mr. Speaker. We did not call them wimps. We had a better description of them, which I cannot use here out of politeness.

EFFECT OF REPORT ON CANADA-FRANCE DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member for St. John's West paid as much attention to the French Prime Minister as he does to the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, then Newfoundlanders might begin to expect that this Minister would put aside his body by Fisher and tongue by Gillette and take this matter seriously in the House of Commons.

Ms. Copps: Right on.

Mr. Tobin: France has been illegally fishing Canadian waters and denying Canadian fishermen their livelihood.

● (1425)

They threatened to catch 36,000 metric tonnes of fish illegally. They promised the best possible security conditions. They have now established, for the first time in history, a French naval presence off the East Coast of Canada, and this