

S.O. 29

Mr. Holtmann: Explain that to the people of Canada. Where do you fit in?

Mr. Benjamin: It is not good enough to sit around blaming the other guys.

Mr. Holtmann: We are waiting with bait on our breath.

Mr. Benjamin: My Leader, who moved this motion which was accepted by the Chair, proposed an alternative solution.

Mr. Holtmann: Oh, wonderful.

Mr. Benjamin: The hon. gentleman whose mouth is open now had his ears closed earlier this day.

Mr. Holtmann: Give us your solution, your wonderful solution.

Mr. Benjamin: The agreement was designed to placate France rather than meet the needs of Atlantic Canada. The agreement gives away fish stocks to France where it has never fished before and is not entitled to in any remote manner. France did not even ask for rights in this area. Why would the Government give France those rights before an arbitrated settlement was reached? It is more dumb bargaining.

Mr. Holtmann: What a wonderful group of people.

Mr. Benjamin: I can tell my hon. friend that a number of us have been on both sides of the bargaining table.

They say that fish is good brain food.

Mr. St. Germain: You haven't eaten any.

Mr. Benjamin: I have listened to my hon. friend opposite and I now know how the good Lord knows where to send the fish. I wonder when he last ate any. When is the last time the Minister of Transport ate any of that good brain food? More important, when is the last time the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) ate any?

Mr. Holtmann: He ate some good fish in Manitoba. I can vouch for that.

Mr. Benjamin: The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans represents part of the Fraser Valley and South Delta where they have Pacific salmon. If he wanted to be a generous Canadian statesman and negotiator, why did he not offer Pacific salmon instead of Atlantic cod to the French? Can you imagine what would have happened to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans if he had told the French that they could have Pacific salmon if they did not mess around in the territory in dispute. The Minister from British Columbia would have been run out of town on a rail and it would have been too good for him. However, he can be generous with the northern cod off Newfoundland. If he were negotiating with the Americans and Japanese for Pacific salmon, would he be equally as generous? I hope my Conservative friends opposite will ask him that.

Mr. Holtmann: So far not too many people have trusted you guys.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to know much, if anything, about fish, other than the ones we have in Last Mountain Lake.

Mr. Holtmann: Then sit down. Sit down if you don't know anything about fish.

Mr. Benjamin: On the other hand, my colleague opposite would not know a bushel of wheat if it hit him in the face and I am sure that he would get up and make a speech on it.

Mr. Holtmann: I am sorry, but I know as much about wheat as you do. Here you are talking about fish. Good for you, you're talking about fish.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, is there a rule that if a Member is going to talk he should be in his own seat?

Mr. Holtmann: There is no rule.

Mr. Benjamin: I am wondering whether you are sure as to who has the floor.

● (2410)

Mr. Speaker: All Hon. Members in the chamber this evening know that the Hon. Member has a great deal of experience in this place. He no doubt asks a rhetorical question but I understand perfectly why it is being asked. The answer, which I had to deal with earlier this evening, is that a Member not in his seat is not entitled to have the floor.

Sometimes it is very difficult to persuade Hon. Members that when they are in someone else's seat they ought also to recognize the fact that they ought not to take the floor in repartee, if I can put it that way, across the aisle. The Hon. Member is absolutely right. If someone is trying to seek the floor from a seat other than that which is their allotted seat in the chamber, of course the Chair cannot recognize the Member. I would advise the Hon. Member who, of course, is a very experienced Member, that perhaps he could continue his debate more effectively if he did not recognize that other Hon. Member either.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I would only say to my friends opposite that I listened carefully to speeches of my colleagues opposite, without interruption. I like to be heckled because it means that in fact they are listening. However, in this instance, they are not listening.

We are aware that it is very difficult to govern this country, with 10 provinces and two territories. Perhaps the worst scenario for any party in power is that many of the provinces are governed by the same party. We appreciate that it can be a difficult situation. However, no matter what the disagreements or misunderstandings with the provinces, the fundamental principle to be held by the national Government and this chamber is that the enhancement and preservation of our