

Supply

claim the French are given rights to fish in Canadian waters. They have repeated this in the Chamber time and time again.

I want to put on the record what is in this 1972 agreement, its exact wording. The exact wording is:

Article 2—to recognize the right of French nationals to fish in these waters subject to possible measures for the conservation of resources, including the establishment of quotas.

The quota for the French fleet in Canadian waters this year is 6,000 tonnes. The Government of France says: “We will catch 26,000 tonnes”. The Government of France notified the Government of Canada that it wants 50,000 tonnes for next year—more than the entire total allowable catch for every country in the world, including Canada, off the coast of Newfoundland.

I am going to now tell you, Mr. Speaker, why we are in the situation that we are in today, why the Canadian Government is seen around the world as being pushovers, and why the Government of France could direct a French naval vessel to arrest a Newfoundland fishing vessel yesterday afternoon. It is not the act of arresting that is so serious. That is not the serious part. The serious part is that this is another action in a long line of actions that has destroyed the Newfoundland fishery.

I will read for you, Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with the Government of Canada, where we got where we are today by simply referring to a letter to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) written by none other than the Minister of Fisheries who is sitting in his place today and who is going to have to listen to his words now that were written on June 24, 1986. I quote:

My Dear Prime Minister:

I am writing to advise you of the political and economic opportunity related to future French fishing quotas in Canadian waters.

He goes on and gets down to this sentence:

The issue involves the weighing of the domestic perspective against general bilateral relations with France.

He concludes his letter in this way:

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. Siddon: Read the rest of the letter.

Mr. Baker: Now I will read from another letter. It is from the Prime Minister, and I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, if these are marked “Cabinet documents”. They were given to me openly.

Mr. Siddon: And taken out of context. Read the whole letter.

Mr. Baker: I am going to read for you, Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister responded to the Minister of Fisheries:

Dear Colleague:

I agree that in dealing with this sensitive issue, we must weigh on the one hand the interests of Canadian fishermen and fishing communities and on the other our bilateral relations with France.

There was a period before I started that sentence and there is a period after. Here is another sentence.

I am therefore pleased that you will be consulting with your colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs—

Well, he did. The Secretary of State for External Affairs in an outrageous, disgusting manner then wrote to the Mayors in France. Here is a letter to the Assistant Delegated to Maritime Affairs, St. Malo, France. M. L. Perouas. It states:

The Prime Minister asked me to thank you for your letter—

This was in French, and I am reading an English translation.

—of December 23, 1985, in which you made known to him your concerns about the rights to fish by French vessels, and especially those from St. Malo, in Canadian waters.

They knew that their rights were coming to an end in Canadian waters because the former Government had said they were going to come to an end. They were concerned and they wrote to the Prime Minister. The Secretary of State went on to state:

This period is soon coming to an end in conformity with what was agreed to between France and Canada in 1972. None-the-less, as in the past, vessels registered in St. Malo in another distant water French port will continue to fish in the Canadian zone of 200 miles outside the Gulf of St. Lawrence and outside the territorial sea . . . I can assure you without hesitation that Canada has not abandoned the people of St. Malo, especially because—we attach a great value to the friendship we have with them. It is because of this that these people will be able to continue to fish Canadian waters in 1986 and well beyond that.

He states in Canadian waters—that is exactly what has happened. There was a decision to allow the Government of France to send in its gigantic trawlers to employ thousands of people in France with fish taken off the coast of Newfoundland. There it was. There was nothing in the 1972 agreement because that ended. There was the Government of Canada saying to the Mayors in France: “We will allow you to fish, although the 1972 agreement has come to an end”. There it is in black and white. If you want to read it in French, Mr. Speaker, you can. If you want to read it in English, Mr. Speaker, it is the same thing.

● (1020)

Today we have another chapter in the book of the destruction and the insults to Canadian fishermen by the Government of France and the Government of Canada. All eyes will now be on the Government of Canada. What will its reaction be? Was it not enough that the Government of France turned around through diplomatic decisions and refused permission to the Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland to land in St. Pierre on a courtesy trip? Was it by accident that the Government of France tricked this Government into actually supporting in the United Nations the appointment of the French negotiator in the fish talks to the World Court that will sit in judgment of this very question in the future?