

Oral Questions

of his Party that we should reopen the ports, if that is the socialist position, then I should say that it is not ours.

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, on Friday the President of France said that Canada is guilty of "hostile, unjust and unacceptable behaviour and France cannot resume talks on the territorial waters dispute until Canada lifts its ports ban".

I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs or the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans this. What happened? How could there be such a great difference between what the Prime Minister, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Minister of Transport said was the response of Mr. Mitterrand, in this House, when Mr. Mitterrand gave a statement such as the one he gave on Friday in St. Pierre? Did the Government have any hint at all that the President was going to be so hostile toward Canada? What will the Government's response be?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is good to have a sensible question on this issue.

As to what the President of France said, we cannot be responsible for what the President of France says, particularly when he is on French soil. But there is a natural tendency to say one thing on your own soil and something else on somebody else's soil.

An Hon. Member: Like the NDP.

Mr. Crosbie: The NDP, of course, does that on 12 patches of soil across the country.

In Moncton, the advisers of the French President underlined that in any event negotiations should recommence at the end of June. As a matter of fact on June 24 and 25 there will be a second round of fishery quota negotiations in Paris. In short, in response to the hon. gentleman's question, our position is that we shall not be moved; we shall continue to be fair and firm for the fishermen of eastern Canada.

OVERFISHING BY FRENCH VESSELS

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, the port closures do not hurt the French fishing fleet from France. They hurt the fishing fleet from St. Pierre and Miquelon, whereas the real culprits, the biggest overfishers in Canadian waters, they go untouched by the Government. All they get are letters of support from the Secretary of State for External Affairs who says: "We will never back down. We will always protect the fishermen of France".

I ask the Minister, who knows that France has now declared that it will overfish by over 20,000 metric tonnes again next year, when the Government will treat French overfishing the same way as it treats overfishing by Quebecers, New Brunswickers, Nova Scotians, or Newfoundlanders, and arrest them? The Spanish had to kidnap one of our officers before

they were arrested for overfishing. Maybe the French should kidnap the Minister of Transport and then maybe they would be arrested. But if they do, they can keep their catch.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the net has not yet been invented that could catch me.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: With respect to violations of our law within our recognized 200-mile economic zone, we will continue to apprehend any miscreants who overfish or break our conservation laws, just as we did with two Spanish vessels which were fined in excess of \$100,000 last week. The power of nations, their circumference, nothing matters to us—we will see that the law is administered to them in the disputed area. We have to abide by international custom, by international law. We will do our best to see that this matter is settled fairly and reasonably. The reason we wish to go to arbitration is to see the question of territorial boundaries settled. In that resolve we shall not be moved.

* * *

● (1450)

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NICARAGUA—CONTRA FORCES' ATTACK ON CANADIAN AID PROJECT

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He responded on Friday to the Contra attack on an aid project in Nicaragua supported by the Canadian Farmers for Peace group. Fortunately no Canadian aid workers were at the site but the Contra attack left 10 Nicaraguans dead, others wounded or captured, and extensive damage to farm equipment, buildings and homes.

Since Washington is the source of Contra funding and arms, has the Minister informed his U.S. counterpart, George Shultz, in the strongest possible terms about Canada's continuing opposition to further U.S. funding of the Contras which threatens Canadian interests and lives as well as those of innocent Nicaraguans?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Member's reference to the statement I issued on Friday. Later today I will be signing a letter to U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz expressing deep concern about the attack on a project