

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 6, 1988

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 82—CANADA-FRANCE FISHING DISPUTE

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate) moved:

That this House deplore the unlawful arrest of a Canadian fishing vessel by the Government of France in area 3PS off the coast of Newfoundland; and

That this House condemn the Government for its failure to protect the Canadian fishing industry and its continuing inability to resolve the Canada-France fishing dispute.

He said: Mr. Speaker, yesterday morning a fishing vessel left a Canadian port to go fishing off the coast of Canada. There were five crew members aboard. Three of them were from Grand Le Pierre, Newfoundland, and two were from Port aux Basques. It was a good day for fishing. They had a licence to fish in area 3PS off the south coast of Newfoundland. The only restriction on their licence was that they were not permitted to fish in Fortune Bay.

Restrictions on the south coast of Newfoundland have been placed on Canadian fishermen by the Government of Canada. For the first time, long liners from the north coast and northeast coast of Newfoundland are forbidden to have licences to fish off the coast of Newfoundland, along the south coast.

The fishery off the south coast of Newfoundland has been drastically overfished. It was not overfished by Canadian fishermen from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Québec, New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island. It was not overfished by any of these fishermen, but it was overfished and continues to be overfished today by gigantic 300-foot factory freezer trawlers that are not from Canada at all. They are from France. They are from St. Malo. They are not even from St. Pierre and Miquelon.

Under the Conservative Government, Canadian fishermen have been restricted from fishing activity along the south coast of Newfoundland and out into the Atlantic Ocean. A Canadian fishing boat from Fogo Island and La Scie on the northeast coast no longer are permitted to have a licence to fish off the

south coast of Newfoundland. They can have a permit for a week or sometimes a month, but no longer a licence.

There is one classification of vessel that is not restricted at all, whether it is 10 feet long, 100 feet long, or 1,000 feet long. As long as that vessel is from France, it can fish all it wants for as long as it wants without interference.

Willie Bolt, Captain of the *Maritimer*, left port yesterday morning with his licence, after being kicked out of Fortune Bay by the Government of Canada. He went fishing where his licence permitted, only to be arrested by the Government of France.

I am not exaggerating when I say that I do not know of any of the 20,000 inshore fishermen who are rich. I do not know one inshore fisherman in Newfoundland who is making as much money as a Member of Parliament or as the Minister of Fisheries in Newfoundland, or even as the head of his union. I do not know one. Yet these are primary producers who contribute more to the economy of the country than do politicians or lawyers. They have been relegated to poverty on the coastline of Newfoundland, more so in the past few years than ever before.

• (1010)

Willie Bolt and his crew have had two bad years in the fishery off the south coast of Newfoundland. Today he sits in St. Pierre. The Government says: "Well, you're free to go but you are not allowed to leave the island".

The French metropolitan fleet today at this very moment is fishing in an area outside of this so-called 12-mile territorial zone. The Department of External Affairs was notified last evening by the Government of France. As a matter of fact, when the tow-line was put on the boat, it was notified that that vessel was going to be arrested. Why? Because they were violating the 12-mile territorial sea of the Government of France. If that is a declaration by the Government of France that there is a 12-mile territorial sea, then the other area is no longer disputed. They cannot have it both ways.

The French metropolitan fleet today has its large enormous vessels out there taking everything from the ocean, further destroying the incomes of Newfoundlanders such as Willie Bolt and his four member crew.

How did we get to this situation today? The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon), the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), and the Minister in charge of free trade all point back to a 1972 agreement in which they