

Adjournment Debate

The *Greenpeace III* was the ship that sailed from British Columbia to protest French nuclear testing. It left with a letter from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) wishing it a safe voyage, and it left partially financed by the government of British Columbia. As we all know, that trip ended in disaster with the boarding of the ship by French government troops, with some severe damage being done not only to the ship but as well to Captain McTaggart.

Captain McTaggart is now over in France on his case, which has been accepted by the French courts, in which he is suing the French government. A few days ago it came to our attention that the French government was not being harassed in any manner whatsoever by the Canadian government and we wondered why. We know the government condemned the French government in this House after the incident. We also know the government helped Captain McTaggart get his ship back and we wonder why this assistance has all of a sudden ended.

I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) and the Acting Prime Minister, the former Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp), if there had been any collusion between the two governments before the boarding of that *Greenpeace III*. They both denied that there was any collusion, and I have to accept their word on that.

Let me read from a story by Leo Ryan, dateline Paris, April 11, under the heading "Greenpeace skipper critical of Canada". It states:

Greenpeace skipper Dave McTaggart today accused the Canadian Government of implicitly allowing a French naval vessel to board his protest yacht in a Pacific nuclear testing area in the summer of 1973.

He charged that a Canadian government denial on Tuesday of a secret agreement between the Ottawa and Paris authorities was couched in "weak and ambiguous terms".

To back up his accusation, Mr. McTaggart cited a "confidential report" addressed on Aug. 23, 1973 by Vice-Admiral Christian Claverie, commander in charge of the French nuclear testing operational group, to an air force general directing the nuclear testing centre.

Mr. McTaggart's lawyer, Hierry Garby-Lacroux, submitted the lengthy report to a Paris court earlier this week as part of the evidence in the proceedings opened against the French Navy.

In a statement released here, Mr. McTaggart points out that "the first paragraph of this long text indicates that after being assured by the general that no retaliatory measures were to be feared from the Canadian government on the occasion of Air France and Cotam (military transport planes) stopovers in Montreal, the admiral ordered the boarding of *Greenpeace III*."

"It would appear from this statement that the French authorities, in some way or other, made contact with the Canadian government and obtained, explicitly or implicitly, the agreement of the Ottawa Government."

"In a statement to the press on April 8, 1975, the Department of External Affairs denies this claim in particularly weak and ambiguous terms. The Canadian government denies that there was an official consultation concerning the boarding but does not deny that there were communications in another form. Following these communications, it was up to the Canadian government to threaten the French government with retaliatory measures."

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"By not doing so, the Canadian government implicitly allowed the boarding to take place" Mr. McTaggart alleged.

New Zealand and Australia, besides bringing a protest against the tests to the International Court in The Hague took the retaliatory measures including barring Air France planes from landing in their countries.

If what Mr. McTaggart alleged is true we have a situation of a Canadian citizen who has been sent on a protest mission by a number of people from British Columbia, who left here with a letter from our Prime Minister wishing him a safe voyage, who left financed by one of our provincial governments, and who was sold out by his government to the French government, and was beaten on his boat and lost an eye. I implore the government to live up to the commitment made to Mr. McTaggart and to many Canadians after the 1973 incident, to go to France with the best legal aid the government can provide and make sure that Mr. McTaggart can at least get some restitution for the great job he did in telling the French nation that Canada no longer likes to see nuclear testing take place in Pacific waters.

Mr. Herb Breau (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, the question of possible subsequent retaliatory action to be taken by the Canadian government was never the subject of discussions between officials of the Department of External Affairs and of the French Government. It would appear from the CP press report regarding this matter that such assurances as may have been given regarding possible Canadian government retaliatory action were made by one French naval officer to another, without any consultation with officials of the Canadian government.

Those exchanges which did take place between French and Canadian government officials, immediately prior to the 1973 boarding of the *Greenpeace III*, expressed the Canadian government's concern for the safety of those Canadians, including Mr. McTaggart, who had declared their intention to enter, and were reported to be in, the French nuclear testing area around Mururoa, in protest against the summer of 1973 French series of nuclear tests.

The Canadian government, through the Canadian embassy in Paris, has been and will continue actively to press the French government for an acceptable out of court settlement. From the very beginning, the Canadian government has taken the view that it could intervene directly with the French on Mr. McTaggart's behalf. Nevertheless, we have always considered that the normal course for him to follow, under international law, would be first to pursue the local legal remedies open to him under French law. In that context the forthcoming hearing follows logically from Mr. McTaggart's earlier filing of action last summer to protect his prescriptive rights. We are keeping in close consultation with Mr. McTaggart and, further to his request, the Canadian embassy is providing him with assistance of an essentially consular nature in connection with the presentation of his case before the courts.

The original commitment that Canada would espouse Mr. McTaggart's claims has not altered. However, the time of espousal still remains open to him. We are seeking the views of Mr. McTaggart and his lawyers regarding any possible adverse effects under French law that espousal might have on his action before the French courts since we would not wish to prejudice his case if we were to espouse at this time.

Whether or not we could espouse his claims after the court hearings would, of course, depend on the outcome of the case. If Mr. McTaggart were to lose on the merits and