

*S.O. 29*

from Atlantic Canada and from other parts of this great country to speak on a topic of tremendous interest and importance to the fishing industry and fishermen of Atlantic Canada.

The Canada-France boundary and fisheries agreement which we are debating tonight is really not an agreement. In first year law I was taught that an agreement to agree is not an agreement; it is merely a statement of intention. The Minister made very clear that there was no agreement. He simply said that there was an intention to proceed with a program which should lead to settlement of the dispute over the maritime boundary off the south coast of Newfoundland and St. Pierre and Miquelon and to provide fishing quotas for France for 1988 to 1991 while the boundary is being determined.

The question many Canadians are asking themselves these days is: How is it that France is in our waters? How is it that France has any access to so-called Canadian fish? All Canadians must realize that until 10 years ago these fish were international fish and there was no such thing as a 200-mile economic zone. International law had not evolved to the point where a country such as Canada could declare a 200-mile economic zone, that being 200 miles from the coastline of our country or to the edge of the continental shelf.

Over the last 25 years we have reached the point in international law where coastal states have recognized jurisdiction over certain resources, marine and under the sea bed adjacent to the land. Those rights which Canada has accrued to other coastal states. Whether or not we like it, St. Pierre and Miquelon are part of France and when we speak about them we speak about France. Attached to that land mass are similar rights accorded to France under international law. Of course it is known by Members of the House that France cannot go 200 miles from St. Pierre and Miquelon without intersecting an area which falls within 200 miles of Canada. There we have the disputed zone.

Where will the line be drawn? The international court of justice has a series of rules, some of which are complicated equidistant rules and others which reflect the continental shelf, the land mass, et cetera. Ultimately these boundaries can only be decided in such a forum. Such was the case in the Georges Bank issue which was settled between Canada and the United States.

It was with a view to settling this dispute and exercising some control over the fishing effort of France that Canada has been attempting to strike an accord with France. We want an accord with France because to this point France has exercised no control over its fishing efforts in the disputed zone. France's fishing effort represented a threat to the continued health and viability of the entire Atlantic fishery off Newfoundland. It is with this motivation that Canada moved to negotiate or attempt to reach some kind of accord. From where else does France get its right to fish other than from international law?

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There are three principal historical documents on which the French base their fishing rights. First is a 1972 treaty between Canada and France. Second is a 1982 agreement between Canada and the European Economic Community and third is a 1984 exchange of notes between Canada and France of June, 1984. For the interest of all Canadians, these three agreements were entered into by the former Liberal Government. It is, therefore, the ultimate hypocrisy on the part of the Opposition Liberal Party over the last two days to say that it accepts no responsibility for the fishing effort that France has expanded into Canadian economic zones.

The Liberal Party is not being consistent. It is clear that the Liberal Party is not putting the facts before the fishermen of Atlantic Canada. It is clear that the Liberal Party views this dispute or uncertainty as an opportunity to gain votes, the votes of people who are concerned about their continued economic viability. Fishermen in this country and in Atlantic Canada who expend a great deal of effort and incur great risk to put food on the table deserve more and better. The treatment they receive from the Liberal Party is shameful.

Just what is it that Canada has agreed to do, Mr. Speaker? Canada has agreed to talk. Nothing else. There is no giveaway of cod or any other fish to France. In fact, the record should show that there is more than a 50 per cent reduction in the cod allocation to France for 1987 over 1986. In 1986, French vessels caught 21,000 tonnes of cod. In 1987, that figure will drop to 8,000 tonnes.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. O'Neil:** The Opposition accuses us of going easy on France. It is quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker. We hear a lot about a treaty expiring in December 1986. What expired was only the right of French vessels to fish in the gulf region. The treaty itself, signed by the Liberal Party, is a perpetual treaty, a perpetual obligation on the people of Canada and the fishermen of Atlantic Canada to share their fishing resource with a foreign country. We reject that. We also heard earlier in tonight's debate from the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall) who selectively quoted statistics and compared apples and oranges. The contrast put before the people of Canada and Members of the House is not valid. It was misleading. It did not reflect the reality in which we find ourselves.

What about France's jurisdictional rights? What were the options? We heard from earlier speakers that Canada had three options, having decided that it wanted to resolve this problem. It could have reached a voluntary accord with France. Our Government tried and, like other Governments, it was unsuccessful. We then decided to pursue the objective of an arbitrated settlement, a third party settlement. What we are talking about tonight is whether or not a mechanism that has been agreed upon will result in a third party settlement.