

Supply

These are times when one might be tempted to invite the people of St. Pierre and Miquelon to forget their old ties with France and to become Canadians. In a country which, for some 20 years now, has been officially bilingual, and proud to be so, they might not feel all that out of place, or certainly one would hope not. But of course they are not simply residents of the New World, if you will; they are inhabiting those two islands in a French context.

Why a Government would do this type of thing to its citizens, I do not know. Is it possible that a Prime Minister desperate for the presidency would really forget about what happens to the little people, to the fishing folk of St. Pierre and Miquelon? Of course, he is thinking of the fishermen of St. Malo and the other coastal ports of France itself. I guess he takes the view that those closer to home will be voting more immediately, and more in number.

These are terrible choices that people make sometimes, and dreadfully wrong choices. But they make them nevertheless.

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to participate in this debate. At the outset, permit me to call to the attention of the Members of the House certain facts, as follows: The Department of External Affairs received a preliminary report concerning this incident about 2.30 p.m. yesterday, from the Canadian Honorary Consul in St. Pierre and Miquelon. The Consul had just been notified by the Maritime Administrator of SPM that the small Canadian trawler, *Maritimer* had been found fishing for cod within the 12-mile territory limit of those islands by a French naval tug, the *Tenace*, and was being escorted into harbour at St. Pierre.

The *Maritimer* was approached by a boarding party from the *Tenace*, and two men, apparently unarmed, were placed on board and remained there until arrival at St. Pierre.

According to Captain Willoughby Bolt of the *Maritimer*, this request was made at 3.40 p.m., or 1.40 p.m., Ottawa time. Less than an hour elapsed before the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa learned of the action of the French vessel.

The *Maritimer* arrived in St. Pierre about 7 p.m., after sailing some three hours. The vessel was met at the dock by the Canadian Honorary Consul, Mr. Jean-Pierre Andrieux for the purpose of providing all possible consular assistance to the captain and the four other crew members.

It was confirmed last evening by the Honorary Consul that the captain and crew members, all residents of Newfoundland, had not been arrested, and the vessel, which had only a small quantity of scallops on board, had not been impounded.

The Consul said that he had the key to the trawler's engine. The crew had all been courteously treated by the French authorities. The crew planned to sleep on the vessel overnight.

At 8 a.m. today, they attended before the fisheries authorities, the SPM Maritime Administration, at which time a decision was made to charge the captain and to impound the

Maritimer. The crew was accompanied throughout by the Honorary Consul to ensure that their rights were fully protected. The charges are in respect of fishing without a licence in French territorial waters. The vessel was carrying 450 kilos of cod. Indications are that a bond in the amount of no less than 500,000 French francs, approximately \$110,000 Canadian, will be required to obtain the release of the trawler. Arrangements are being made by the Canadian Government to post this bond with a view to releasing the vessel today.

● (1410)

There was never any question that the *Maritimer* was not fishing in the disputed zone where Canada and France have observed for some years mutual restraint in the enforcement of their fishery regulations. We were informed that the crew of the *Maritimer* have admitted to the French authorities that they were fishing within five or six miles of the northeasterly side of the Islands of Miquelon and Langlade, that it was their long standing practice to fish in that area without hindrance from the French authorities and they were unaware of any requirement to obtain a licence. The location of the incident was between these islands and Newfoundland, and thus within the maritime boundary allocated to France under the 1972 treaty.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the inshore fishermen of both countries have for a long time, indeed decades, pursued their activities in each other's waters without hindrance. That was done in recognition of the particular circumstances of small inshore fishing vessels, and that practice has been long recognized. To change these traditions and abandon such reciprocity could have the most serious consequences for the communities along the south shore of Newfoundland and for St. Pierre and Miquelon as well.

Since the French Government appears determined to act against this long-standing practice, Canada will most certainly protest vigorously and take whatever action may be necessary. We have already been in touch with the French authorities to register our concern over this regrettable incident in which there appears to have been no deliberate flouting of French law.

In the present circumstances and until the matter is clarified to our satisfaction, it is unthinkable that the process of mediation in which we have been engaged and in which we were making substantial progress, can be allowed to follow its course as if nothing had happened. Indeed, we find it difficult to understand why this incident has occurred at the very moment our negotiator, Mr. Fortier, was en route to Paris. Canada cannot be counted on to show understanding and a spirit of compromise when simultaneously France, through the rigid application of the letter of its laws, modifies a long-standing practice by both sides of non-interference with the traditional activities of our inshore fishermen. These are the people who require and deserve the most generous treatment. We intend to continue protecting their interests with every means at our disposal.