

S.O. 29

Mr. Rodriguez: That is what happened. I asked myself this question. I have been told that the Government of Newfoundland, the Premier of Newfoundland, the fishermen and the industry were all involved in the negotiations. The agreement with France, which was signed in 1972, came to an end in May, 1986. I wonder why the Premier of Newfoundland, the fishermen and the industry were suddenly cut out of the negotiations in December when it came down to the short strokes.

● (2230)

I understand that the Government wanted to have something for the Premier of France to sign. It wanted to roll out the red carpet, have some champagne, and then have a photo opportunity for His Majesty, the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney). The Government wanted great pomp and ceremony, in Napoleonic style, for the signing of this agreement. Newfoundland had made it quite clear that the French fleet was not to have any access to the northern cod stocks. That position was made very clear to the Government. Therefore, the whole idea was to cut the trouble makers out and have a nice little cabal with the Department of External Affairs and the French negotiators. The Government had a nice little *tête-à-tête*, a little wine, a little music and, *peut-être*, a little bit of *amour*. In the process the people of Newfoundland were shafted in spades.

Mr. McCurdy: I would be embarrassed to be a Conservative.

Mr. Forrestall: I would be ashamed to be one of you.

Mr. Rodriguez: These are the same Tories who were so critical of federal-provincial relations during the Trudeau era. They were to begin a new era. We have seen the new era in the agreement that has been signed.

Mr. O'Neil: It is not an agreement. Produce the agreement.

Mr. Rodriguez: The Conservatives do not give two hoots about involving the leadership in Newfoundland in the fisheries. As far as the Conservatives are concerned, the leadership of Newfoundland does not count. The Tories have three seats in Newfoundland and the people of Newfoundland will give them a lesson in the next federal election.

Mr. O'Neil: You have never been on a boat. You wouldn't know a fish if you slipped on one.

Mr. Forrestall: Stop playing politics.

Mr. Rodriguez: They are all upset, Mr. Speaker. They ought to explain this to Newfoundlanders. As a result of this deal we got better relations with France. I heard the French negotiator on TV tonight. He was not upset at all. He loved the deal. He was asked whether he thought this would stop the overfishing by the French fleet. He said, "No, we have always considered

those waters French waters". Big deal, Mr. Speaker. Tough negotiations.

Mr. O'Neil: There is no deal.

Mr. Forrestall: If you don't know what you are talking about, you should sit down and shut up.

Mr. Rodriguez: What has happened here, Mr. Speaker? Why did the Government eliminate the interested parties from the negotiations? As I have said before, it was the Prime Minister's desire to have a showpiece and a photo opportunity. I believe that a second reason is that the Conservative Party has lost touch with the grass roots of this nation. A headline in the Montreal *Gazette* says that Ottawa sold out the fishermen. However, the Government did not sell out the Newfoundland fishermen at all, it was a giveaway, just as the Government gave away the softwood lumber.

The Premier of Newfoundland is not a New Democrat or a Liberal. He is one of these Tories. In fact, he is so upset that he said: "Apparently when France rattles its sword, Canada bends its knees. It's a terrible situation and they did it behind our backs". We are once again on our knees to make a deal. The Government has all the flexibility of an octopus. It has a wishbone where its backbone should be. Instead of standing up for Canadian rights, the Government has surrendered. It did it on softwood lumber and has done it again with this interim agreement.

Richard Cashin, the head of the fishermen's union in Newfoundland, said that the Tories at the federal level have sold out the interests of the Newfoundland fishermen. If the Government had any self-respect left it would tear up that interim agreement, accord, or whatever they want to call it. That is the only way the Tory Government can attempt to get back into the good graces of the people of Newfoundland.

Mr. Morrissey Johnson (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the remarks from both sides of the House this evening the only thing on which I have heard total agreement is that there is extensive overfishing by France off the south coast of Newfoundland, St. Pierre and Miquelon. That is the only thing that has been agreed upon by all Parties this evening.

I wonder how serious opposition Members are about wanting to protect the rights and interests of Canadian fishermen to allow them to take more fish to feed the fish plants and give more work to the fish plant workers than they are presently getting. It seems to me that there is great fear on the part of Liberal Members that the Government might be successful in negotiating an agreement with the Government of France. Otherwise, they would be telling us to get on with the negotiations in an attempt to stop the overfishing that is happening off the south coast of Newfoundland. I could say the same thing about the NDP Party. They should also be encouraging the Government—