

Oral Questions

Newfoundland. It will overfish by four times its quota like it did last year, totally destroying the fishing resource, while the Government does nothing about it.

I would like to ask the Minister of External Affairs, or the Acting Minister of External Affairs, why is the Government of Canada only now flexing its muscles with one vessel from St. Pierre and Miquelon loaded to the gunnels with politicians and film crews just begging to be arrested? Why not chase the real culprit, the French metropolitan fleet right from France, or is the Government afraid of the sharks and only chases the minnows?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we have taken a firm position on the question of protecting the interests of Canadian fishermen on the east coast of Newfoundland. We did not give away the shop as was done in 1972 by the Government which entered into a treaty with France, the Canada-France Treaty of 1972, that gave them access to fish in Canadian waters.

As a result of the recent dispute we have taken a firm position. We closed ports to the French fishing vessels until they complied with the law and stopped overfishing in disputed area 3PS.

We closed the Burgeo Bank. We closed the fishing area of the western gullies. We have taken firm action, and the result is the incident we see occurring today, where a vessel from St. Pierre and Miquelon has deliberately come into Canadian waters to try to create some kind of incident.

I want to remind the hon. gentleman that we have 5,000 fishermen and 70 fishing communities along the south coast of Newfoundland. We are protecting them, and we are going to continue protecting them, the interests of whom were given away by the hon. gentleman's Government in 1972.

REPORTED DECISION TO SEND DISPUTE TO ARBITRATION

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, that 1972 agreement says specifically "subject to resource being available".

Since the Hon. Minister brought up agreements, I would like to ask him to verify for the people of Canada that the Government of Canada, through its negotiator, has now agreed with the Government of France, through its negotiator, to send the entire fishing dispute to arbitration, and that that arbitration will be non-binding, not binding on either party.

Why such a loose agreement when we have such a strong position? We have been "Chiraced". We have been shellacked and, with non-binding arbitration, we are going to be "Ex-laxed".

● (1430)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): There has been a series of negotiations with France by Canada during which we have been as reasonable as one could expect.

We have made offers of quotas of fish to French fishermen and the fishermen of St. Pierre and Miquelon on the condition that France agrees to go to international arbitration on the question of the territorial boundaries of St. Pierre and Miquelon *vis-à-vis* Canada. It has refused to do that.

Canada has not agreed to any non-binding arbitration or any binding arbitration on the question of fish quotas in Canadian waters. We do not intend to agree to any such arbitration. In the last three or four weeks there have been meetings and discussions as to whether a process of mediation might be agreed to by Canada and France, whether a mediator, under the proper terms and conditions, could be employed to help bring a resolution to this problem. That is not yet settled. There will be other meetings in connection with that possible process within the next week or 10 days.

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Crosbie: If you don't want to have the answers, don't ask the questions.

An Hon. Member: Sit down!

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AIR CANADA

SALE OF SHARES—WINNIPEG MAINTENANCE BASE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It has to do with reports today by the Manitoba Conservative Leader, Mr. Filmon, that he has guarantees from the Government with respect to the preservation of Air Canada maintenance jobs in Winnipeg. These are guarantees the Government would not give to the House in Question Period yesterday and the day before. I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister is prepared to say what kind of guarantee he gave to Mr. Filmon. Or was this just to get Mr. Filmon through the next difficult few weeks for him during the election campaign?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the guarantees I gave Mr. Filmon are the same guarantees I gave in this House. It was outlined by Air Canada, and indicated in the announcement that there clearly would be provisions for the establishment of Montreal as its home office and the maintenance of the major overhaul operational centres, namely, Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg.

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATIVE GUARANTEE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Deputy Prime Minister gave no guarantees. All he did was quote Air Canada at the same time as he announced a plan to turn the control of Air Canada over to