

*Supply*

I ask for unanimous consent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Order, please. The Speaker has no option but to receive the request.

**Mr. Mills:** That is not a good thing to do.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (M. DeBlois):** I have no choice but to comply with the decision of the members of this House. And since there is not unanimous consent, I cannot go back to that matter.

[*English*]

**Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):** Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has just given the lie to all of her pious comments about being concerned and serious in wishing to protect and defend the cod stocks in Canada's eastern waters and the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. It is completely hypocritical of her to come here and claim that she is—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Order, please. I have to remind all members that there is no unanimous consent to extend the period. It is not the choice of the minister. I ask members to be fair on that matter.

**Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my comments. They are less well prepared than they should be because I was planning to intervene on a question or comment to the minister if she had stayed a little longer.

I would like to begin by addressing the point I was going to raise earlier with the minister, the question of control of the stocks currently in the area, that is the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.

As the minister would know and everyone here would know, that is currently regulated by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, NAFO. One of the problems we have with NAFO is the fact that its current constitution does not have any teeth. There is no way to regulate Canada or any other country that wants to enforce more stringent conservation measures or formulas for managing fish stocks under the region governed by NAFO in that area. It permits countries such as Spain

and Portugal to fish in that zone with impunity and to violate the NAFO quotas and in fact their own quotas. Canada has no recourse under the current rules to do anything about it.

If we are not to proceed immediately as our motion suggests with functional jurisdiction over the nose and tail of the Grand Banks to protect those straddling stocks, it is clearly in order to seek a strengthening of the NAFO convention so that it allows countries to enforce the NAFO quotas. Currently they are meaningless because countries such as Spain and Portugal violate them routinely and have been doing so for several years. There is absolutely no way in which the quotas under NAFO can be enforced.

The government knows very well that some obvious amendments can be made to the NAFO convention which would allow for the convention to have more teeth, to be stronger and to enable that organization, in the absence of Canada's jurisdiction over those zones, to be perhaps more effective in conserving those stocks.

I am sure the minister is very well aware, as is the minister of fisheries, that article 12 of the NAFO convention which bears directly on this problem needs to be strengthened and needs to be made more effective so that this can take place.

We are informed that NAFO will be meeting May 1 at a special meeting which I believe will be convened by Canada. I have been told the issue which is central to the effectiveness of NAFO is not even on the agenda. I would think it ought to be very high on the agenda. If this government does not want to extend functional jurisdiction now but wants to proceed gradually, as it seems to want to do, one would think it would at least be pushing to strengthen the organization that currently regulates the area in which the nose and tail of the Grand Banks is located, namely NAFO.

It is very surprising to me that would not be very high on the agenda. This government should be seeking to put some teeth into the NAFO convention. Failing that, perhaps the government ought to be considering getting out of NAFO altogether since it is obviously not of any use to Canada in terms of protecting the straddling stocks, one of its major responsibilities.