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To clarify the record, I have known my Leader in this Party for many years. Of all the people that I know who would never recommend an armed intervention in this type of situation, the Member of Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) is the individual. Whether we debate it, or whether it was misunderstood, it is simply not correct to say that.

We have a very difficult situation. In the debate tonight and at other times when looking at some of the ways in which this House operates, one does get a little embarrassed. I must admit that there are times when even I am embarrassed at my own behaviour. We tend to get carried away.

On a serious issue like this, there is a basic need for unity in approach against other nations. There is really a need to attend a process. For Canadians to be effective in the world, there has to be scrupulous attention paid to the process of making sure that consultation has taken place, that the concerns and fears of other people have been examined and dealt with to the greatest degree possible, so that we can all move forward together.

• (2450)

I am certain it is difficult for the Government at this particular point in time to have Premiers in the Atlantic provinces expressing serious concerns on a major initiative which really needs support and unity to deal effectively with them. This will now take its course. The Government has bit the bullet and moved on. For better or for worse, the moving finger having writ moves on.

However, we are faced with many other issues. Recently we in the House debated the free trade problem. There is not consensus in the country on that issue. There will not be unity in facing the United States. There were some serious problems with the softwood lumber deal. In a speech which I made in the House my expression of concern was more that the Premier of British Columbia had undercut a national effort which had gone on for quite a long time. I guess there is a time when there is some need for consensus in an approach to solve an extremely difficult problem. There is a need, on the part of the Government, to go through the process of consultation to ensure that there is a field on which the maximum consensus achievable can be attained. On the part of the Opposition, I think there comes a point, when the country faces another nation in a very difficult situation which is critical for Canada, where we must look at facing it together to the best degree possible.

There are other such areas in British Columbia; this is certainly not the last one to go. I and many people in British Columbia have serious concerns about the Canada-U.S. salmon interception treaty. Most people on the West Coast remember very seriously that the document was pushed forward quickly and without adequate consultation, we feel, in order to be signed at a meeting between the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the President of the United States in Quebec City. There are those people who would argue that it was not done hastily. So be it. However, in the minds of many

people it was. What was the motivation which pulled that agreement forward? It seemed to be more the Shamrock Summit than certainly the needs and concerns of the people who would live under its terms.

There is another issue. The St. Pierre and Miquelon dispute is not the last time we will have troubles with our neighbours. I draw to the attention of the House a serious problem with the A-B line bordering the northern part of British Columbia and Alaska. The Americans have claimed an equidistant operation. The old A-B line is not acceptable to them. They would move it out further. It would give them enormous access to Canadian fishery resources. The Americans have issued oil and gas leases on the other side of the A-B line. Canadians, fishermen who live in my constituency, have been arrested by armed American vessels on the other side of the line. They have fished on Canadian charts which show that to be Canadian waters.

Mr. Forrestall: Does that have anything to do with the motion before the House?

Mr. Skelly: That process has begun. The Hon. Member brings me back to the topic at hand. However, I would stress with him that there will be an enormous battle in the House once again unless the process is followed. It is of extreme concern to Canadians what happens in that northwestern corner where the A-B line sits. It is a gate which controls some of the richest fishery resources of Canada. If we do not do it properly, we stand the risk of losing them.

I would urge that the mistakes which have been made—and I use the term “mistakes”—be carefully examined and hopefully not repeated.

I think we have had an extremely vigorous debate tonight. I think the Speaker chose wisely by rating this problem serious enough for an emergency debate in the House. I think there has been a full debate on it. Hopefully the agreements which are put forward with France can be ones in which Canadians have a stake and on which Canadians work together. Hopefully the Government will move forward and try to assist Newfoundland with its very justified concerns. There have been concerns expressed about factory freezer trawlers and about the ability of Newfoundlanders to share in the wealth in those northern stocks. Hopefully they would be listened to and, even though late, there would be an opportunity to move in quickly, not only to bring Premier Peckford on side in seeking a solution, but to deal with the issue of trying to provide for Newfoundland fair and effective access to those resources, so that Canadians living in Newfoundland can be beneficiaries of our resources.

There is much to be done. Hopefully the Government will move forward from here in a positive direction, so that Canadians can back it, to whatever degree possible, in its endeavours to obtain a decent agreement with France.

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to join with my colleagues