

S.O. 29

In case one is inclined to think, as some Members on the government side might be, that Mr. Peckford is an aberration who, for whatever reason, has a battle to pick with the Government of Canada, we saw in very vivid form today the reaction of another Premier from Nova Scotia.

Mr. Orlikow: Another Conservative Premier.

Mr. Broadbent: Another conservative Premier who, according to a Canadian Press wire story, found it to be an incredibly unacceptable deal. I telephoned Premier Buchanan as well to try to get from him some rationale about what he thought might have led to this decision. The Premier of Nova Scotia also had no answer about what could cause the federal Government to make such an incredible deal. His rough calculations, according to figures which appeared in the press, were that this would cost the people of Atlantic Canada some \$200 million.

We have the Premier of Nova Scotia and his Government opposed. We have the Premier of Newfoundland and his Government opposed. So far as I am aware, any spokesperson for the industry or the unions of the workers directly affected have been totally opposed to the deal.

Mr. Riis: Who supported it?

Mr. Broadbent: That is a good question. The only people who supported it were members of the federal caucus of the Conservative Party, which we can be assured will be a greatly diminished number in about two years from now.

If one asks oneself the question, as one must, how the Government could take this approach and why we ended up in such a deal, one looks for some kind of rationale. I regret to say that the only rationale I could find is that in this tentative agreement with the Government of France we have another illustration of the Government's whole approach to international negotiations. Its approach is to make concession after concession until it has given the other side enough so that it feels overstuffed and then signs an agreement.

I wish I was kidding in this context. I wish my remarks were simply facetious. However, I do not think that at all. I believe that is what the Government has done. It is kind of a Willy Loman approach to international relations—a smile, a handshake, give away what you have and you will get an agreement. As strange as that ought to be to anyone, it is the approach of the Government. We have seen it in the negotiations with the United States.

I ask the Conservative Members, who I agree are paying serious attention to this debate, to think about that. As soon as the Prime Minister came into power, in terms of our bilateral arrangements with our greatest trading partner, the United States, what did he do? The Government gave up FIRA. Then it made concessions on shakes and shingles. Then it caved in on the pharmaceutical industry. Then it caved in completely on the softwood decision. In sector after sector the Government, in terms of getting a free trade agreement with the United

States, has been giving the United States everything it could conceivably want, and then some. It followed the same kind of approach with the Government of France by giving it additional fishing rights in one part of our territory as a gesture to obtain an agreement to negotiate settlement elsewhere, not to have a settlement.

Any foolish person can get an agreement with someone else if one gives the other person everything he wants. That is not the way the Prime Minister of Canada ought to be governing the people of Canada. He was elected to govern Canada, not to give Canada away piece by piece.

Obviously members of my Party and the people of Atlantic Canada will be pleased that we have had this debate. Before it is too late, I hope the Government will come to its senses. I hope it will listen to the people of Atlantic Canada. I hope it will listen to the arguments which will be made on the opposition side. I hope it will listen to the Governments of its own Party throughout Atlantic Canada. In short, I hope it will change its mind and tear up this agreement. I hope, just for once, the Government will say no to another country—no to France and yes to Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I think we should compliment the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party for bringing forward this important motion. In the spirit of parliamentary reform, I think it is important that all Members of Parliament have an opportunity to discuss from time to time issues of critical importance to Canada. Indeed this is such an issue.

I was going to say that it is always easy for opposition Members to be critical. It is far more helpful if they come forward with some good ideas, proposals, and solutions to difficult problems with which the Government and previous Governments have wrestled for many years.

Mr. Broadbent: We just did.

Mr. Siddon: I hear the Hon. Leader of the NDP. I was about to compliment him for bringing forward some solutions. The Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party suggested that the time to negotiate has ended. I find that to be somewhat incredulous because Canada has always been a peaceful nation.

The problem we inherited is one which extends back some 450 years in the history of our country and it is not one which suggests a simple solution. In fact we have but three choices to make in the face of this history and a strong claim by France, another country which has been an important building block and an important piece of the history of our country, to perpetual fishing rights within the zone we now claim and have claimed since 1977 as the sovereign fishing domain of Canada primarily.

Of course we are talking about an area in dispute whose boundaries have been interpreted in two different ways—one