

S.O. 29

through a convention between the United Kingdom and France. Subsequent to that there was an agreement in 1972. The purpose, or the *raison d'être*, if you will, of that agreement was to phase out all the French fishing in the gulf. The Member for St. John's West—I do not think he did it intentionally, but perhaps he did it as a defence—did not talk about the provisions in that agreement with regard to reciprocal rights for Atlantic Canadians. He forgot to mention that but went on to talk about the concept of perpetuity. He did not quote the clause in which he substantiates his argument. He said that there is no definitive total allowable catch. On that point he is correct, Sir. But gross negligence is apparent when you listen to the Hon. Member for St. John's West. He refuses conveniently, I might add, to make mention of the fact that on October 9, 1980, there was an agreement between France and Canada with regard to the maximum allowable catch. He would allow the House to believe that there was a major omission in the 1972 agreement, and he is right. However, he should also be candid enough to tell Hon. Members and the people of Newfoundland that that omission was rectified in 1980.

● (2340)

That is one thing, but let us look at the duplicity of both the Hon. Member for St. John's West and, in particular, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon). That is a very strong term to use on the floor of the House of Commons but I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Member for St. John's West says one thing in Newfoundland and another thing in this Chamber. Talking about an obvious, flagrant misuse of documentation, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans produced information in a press release on January 27 which was in contradiction to the private and confidential documentation possessed by the Department of External Affairs. That is duplicity at its worst.

Perhaps the crime in all of this is what the Government promised in 1984. It promised consultation. How many times have we heard government Members say in the Chamber: "We will consult with the provinces, with the working men and women of Canada, with industry and with the various sectors of the economy in order to arrive at public policy in the best interests of all Canadians"?

Tonight Members from the government side have said unequivocally that they are upset because there was no consultation. The Premier of the Province of Newfoundland and others have also echoed that. However, the remedy they wish to invoke now for the people of Newfoundland and Canadians in general is an apology. They want to say: "We are sorry we did not consult with you. We are really sorry. What has gone on is terrible". That is not enough. Conservative Members of Parliament from Newfoundland have a responsibility. They have a majority in this Chamber. They ought to do the proper thing and demand forthwith that this agreement be called null and void and that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans resign.

Let us talk about the process of consultation. There was no consultation. The Premier of the Province of Newfoundland, the former employer of the Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso (Mr. O'Neil) and his idol and mentor, said about the Minister of Fisheries and the Government's policies that they are incompetent. What better evidence do you need than to have a provincial Premier of Tory persuasion commenting like that with regard to this particular policy? Why did the Premier say what he did? He said it because there was no consultation, just as there was no consultation in the Province of Newfoundland as evidenced by the statements made by Premier Peckford on behalf of his people.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is not only incompetent, he is insensitive to the vital importance of a resource in the Province of Newfoundland. For those two reasons, he should do the honourable thing and resign from this federal Cabinet forthwith. If the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is not prepared to do that, let us put this on the line. Let us see where members of the Conservative Party from Newfoundland really stand. Will they say that they will apologize or will they have the intestinal fortitude and guts to stand up for their people and say that they will cross the floor and resign from their Party if this agreement is not called null and void and if the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans does not resign forthwith? We will wait for 72 hours to see what these Members opposite will do. I am afraid that they will follow the likes of the Hon. Member for St. John's West by going down to Newfoundland to cry and wail, only to come back to Ottawa to say that they pulled the wool over the eyes of the people again. That is a shame.

The Hon. Member for St. John's West spoke on the radio and for the benefit of Hon. Members, I wish to let the House know what he said. I have a transcript from the VOCM action line of Wednesday, January 28, 1987. The Minister of Transport said that those responsible for this are certainly insensitive to the importance of the issue in Newfoundland and Labrador. This great paragon of Newfoundland concerns went one step further. He did not stop there. This great eloquent man, a paragon of Newfoundland interests, said that they were to have as one of their objectives better, improved federal relations, one of their hallmarks so far, but that this was hardly the way to go about it.

The Minister of Transport, the Hon. Member for St. John's West, says one thing down there and something different here in Ottawa. Who is the puppet and who is pulling the strings? Is it the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans? Is it the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) or the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who is pulling the strings? Shame on the Hon. Member for St. John's West.

Hon. Members opposite are in disagreement with one another. The Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso has said that there is no agreement. The Hon. Member for Burin—St. George's has said that there is an agreement. I wish they would make up their minds. Either there is an agreement or there is not. To have an agreement, there must