

Oral Questions

—in dealing with this sensitive issue, we must weigh on the one hand the interests of Canadian fishermen—and on the other our bilateral relations with France. . . . I would be grateful for an update from you and Mr. Clark prior to the next meeting with the French negotiators.

Did the Prime Minister receive that update? If he did, why did he keep it secret from the Minister of Transport and the provincial Premiers? Did he agree with the negotiators during that update?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can understand the shame and the sadness that the Hon. Member must feel being a member of a Party that agreed to this document in 1972, which I table for your consideration, Mr. Speaker.

In regard to updates, of course we were kept advised on a regular basis. The complexity of this issue is known even to my hon. friend. He knows full well how difficult it is in trying to resolve all of the aspects of this in a comprehensive manner. What we have done, as an interim step, in no way compromises anything in Newfoundland and Labrador. Not a single codfish in the contested zone has been affected by the undertakings that have been made. That cod stock now is presently being fished under agreements—

An Hon. Member: 15,000 metric tonnes.

Mr. Mulroney: —made by previous Governments.

Mr. Cassidy: The cod may revolt.

Mr. Mulroney: We are aware—

Mr. Nystrom: It is “cod” awful.

Mr. Mulroney: I realize that the New Democratic Party does not view this matter very seriously, but we take the interests of Newfoundland fishermen very, very seriously. I regret the fact that Members of the New Democratic Party are laughing at a very sensitive issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for New Westminster—Coquitlam.

Mr. Crosbie: Where are the gunboats, Pauline?

Mr. Nystrom: Sock it to Crosbie, Pauline.

Ms. Jewett: My question is not for you, Crosbie.

An Hon. Member: The old codfather himself.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS

ADVANCED CRUISE MISSILE TESTING INQUIRY

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Twenty-four hours ago I brought to the Minister's attention the existence of his Department's briefing note No. 50 dated April 21, 1986, concerning a project proposal for testing the Advanced Cruise Missile in Canada.

Mr. Crosbie: Rambo Jewett.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Jewett: As the Minister is aware, “project proposal” is the term used to denote a formal, detailed U.S. request for weapon testing under the Canada-U.S. testing agreement. Now that the Minister knows of the existence of this request from the United States, of almost a year ago, will the Minister tell the House today what Canada's response was to that request? Did we say yes or, as I hope, no?

Mr. Nystrom: Or maybe.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, what I can do is repeat to the Hon. Member what I said yesterday, namely, that there is no current request before Canada at the present time to test the Advanced Cruise.

Ms. Jewett: That is not what I asked.

Mr. Beatty: The Hon. Member says that is not what she asked. She is back from re-reading *The Washington Post*. I think it is important for her to know that there is no current request before Canada nor are we aware of any prospective need in the foreseeable future by the United States to test the Advanced Cruise. If a request is received, we will consider it.

CANADIAN POSITION

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, this is becoming Orwellian. The Minister is denying the existence of a document secured under the Access to Information Act. He is denying its very existence. It was dated April 21, 1986. He was not then the Minister. Has he consulted his predecessor about the Canadian response to that document since, under the Memorandum of Understanding we have with the United States, a response must be made within 30 days. Will the Minister table the request in the House and table the response?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, on a continuing basis the Canadian Government discusses with other allies various elements of defence policies. It is not appropriate for us to go into those in detail on the floor of the House of Commons.

Mr. Fulton: Testing a Cruise Missile is reasonably important.