

*Oral Questions*

## ROLE OF CANADIAN MINISTERS

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount):** This seems to be a trip of photos as usual, rather than business as usual, for the Prime Minister. Let us hope that the Minister of Finance and the Secretary of State for External Affairs are carrying on serious discussions on behalf of the interests of Canadians. How will we know? Will the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that the office of the Prime Minister has in fact muzzled these two Ministers by refusing to permit them to take their press spokesmen, their press assistants, to Bonn?

• (1120)

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, at times when I was sitting over there and the Hon. Member, as a former Minister, was sitting over here, I reflected on his contributions during Question Period and in debate, and thought that there was an honourable guy who should really be in the Tory Party, but I am now beginning to have doubts about that when he makes that sort of unkind and untrue representation.

The Prime Minister is in Europe admirably discharging his responsibilities at the Bonn Economic Summit, as are the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of Finance. Rather than the critical attitude being adopted by the Hon. Member, I think he should be acting in the best interests of Canada and urging on the Prime Minister and his two Ministers in their very laudable task.

## OVERFISHING BY WEST GERMAN FLEET

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, I can reciprocate and say that I have great respect for the Hon. Member, and always had.

**Mr. Axworthy:** But we do not want him over here; don't go too far.

**Mr. Johnston:** That is why I suggest that deep in his heart he really does not believe what he is saying to us today but feels constrained by this place to do so.

Let me point out to the Deputy Prime Minister that the Prime Minister himself is steering clear, or his handlers are steering him clear, of all controversial issues during this trip.

Yesterday the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, whom I see in his place today, characterized the problem of overfishing off the East Coast of Canada by West German vessels as, and I quote, "a shocking and serious situation". I am sure the Deputy Prime Minister agrees, but why doesn't the Prime Minister of Canada seize this unique opportunity to raise this issue with Chancellor Kohl at the Economic Summit? Or is this issue, something that affects the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Canadians, too controversial to raise in the forum of an economic summit?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, again speculation. How in

the world does the Hon. Member know what the Prime Minister is raising with Chancellor Kohl?

**Some Hon. Members:** Tell us.

**Mr. Nielsen:** How does he know that it is not being raised by the Prime Minister? How does the Hon. Member expect me to tell him, instant by instant, what is being discussed over there?

I am certain that he will be discussing, as will the Minister of Finance and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, all those matters which are important and in the Canadian interest. They will take every opportunity in Bonn to affect those bilateral discussions. It behooves the Hon. Member ill, and it is certainly not in the country's interest, for him to be making the suggestions which he is making. Instead of doing that he should be applauding the efforts which are being made by the Prime Minister and others in that group.

Anyone who knows the Prime Minister knows very well that he is not handled like one of his predecessors in office was handled and muzzled in 1980.

## INTERESTS OF NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERMEN

**Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow on the line of questioning begun by the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri—Westmount, by saying to the Deputy Prime Minister that the Prime Minister is now in the very country which is raping the resource most important to Newfoundland. It is simply not good enough to say that they do not know what the Prime Minister is doing in West Germany. We want more than smiles. Newfoundlanders want to know that the Prime Minister is over there fighting for them. I want an assurance that while the Prime Minister is in West Germany he will make sure that he raises this issue, fights on behalf of us, and stops the draining of the lifeblood of our economy.

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, I assure the Hon. Member that he can remove all doubts instantly with respect to the ability and the determination of the Prime Minister of Canada to fight for Canada's interest wherever he goes in the world, and not just as the Bonn Economic Summit.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

• (1125)

## REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ASSURANCE

**Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador):** Mr. Speaker, can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us and the people of Newfoundland today that the Prime Minister of Canada, of all Canada, including the fishermen on the East Coast, while in West Germany will raise this matter, will fight for our interests and see to it that this draining of fishing resources on the East Coast, which are the only thing we have left, is going to stop?