

Oral Questions

First, what is at issue here in this present bizarre incident is not the 12-mile limit, despite what the Hon. Member has tried to suggest. What is at issue here is the jurisdiction over waters, a jurisdiction that was established by a Liberal treaty in 1972. The Hon. Member should not try to mislead people about the application of the 12-mile limit because that is not what is at issue here.

The second point that has to be made is that this strange incident yesterday involves, among other things—

Mr. Tobin: It's not an incident, it's an insult.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): —a break in the practice, a practice carried out by both France and Canada, based upon a principle that this dispute between our two nations would not be fought on the back of small fishermen.

Mr. Robichaud: What do you think they're doing now?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Hon. Member understands that what is involved here is a small inshore fishing vessel that has been hauled into St. Pierre. It has been the practice of both countries for some time that this dispute should not be fought on the back of small fishermen. The traditional practices protected the small fishermen of both countries. Our position is that those traditional practices should continue.

When we called in the French Ambassador this morning to protest, the French indicated that their position, their policy, has not changed. Naturally, the Government of Canada is supporting the captain of the *Maritimer*. If bail is set the Government of Canada will make arrangements to meet that bail.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Liberal Party does not want to help the captain of the *Maritimer*. We intend to. We intend to do that as we have throughout the piece. We intend to continue to do that, to protect that captain, and to protect the other inshore fishermen of Canada.

REQUEST THAT CANADA STOP NEGOTIATING SUBMARINE AND AIRPLANE PURCHASES

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the Minister of Fisheries Minister on August 19, 1986, with respect to this dispute the Prime Minister stated:

I agree that in dealing with this sensitive issue, we must weigh on the one hand the interests of Canadian fishermen and fishing communities and on the other our bilateral relations with France.

The only treaty that Newfoundlanders are interested in today is the treaty they signed in 1949, the Terms of Union between Canada and Newfoundland. They thought it made them Canadians. They expect that when their interests are challenged that this Government, this Canadian Government, will defend their Canadian interest.

Let us quit beating around the bush. Is the Secretary of State for External Affairs prepared to stand and say today that as long as this kind of action continues by France, which the Government itself has described as irresponsible, Canada will cease today any further negotiation on the purchase of submarines from France, worth some \$12 billion, and will order Air Canada to cease today any further negotiations for \$1.5 billion worth of airplanes from France? Will he do that? Or is he saying that Newfoundland is nothing but an impoverished and disposable bargaining chip in our relationship with France? Is that what he is saying?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it may be that the Liberal Government which signed the 1972 treaty regard Newfoundland as a disposable part of Canada. It may be that Liberal Governments which followed energy policies that were detrimental to the development of Newfoundland regard Newfoundland as a disposable part of Canada. This Government is changing those policies that were prejudicial to Newfoundland. We have done that in other fields. We are doing it now in a negotiation with respect to the fishery, a negotiation which will protect the interest of Canadian fishermen in Newfoundland and elsewhere.

What is at issue now is a bizarre incident to which we have responded. We have responded with a protest to the French Government this morning. We have responded by direct contacts with the captain of the *Maritimer*. We will continue to support him, and to support the other fishermen of the inshore fishery of Newfoundland throughout this incident and into others should they occur.

FRENCH INSULTS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, there comes a time when a nation must stand up to be counted. The Governor General of Canada was insulted in France during her visit last year. The Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland was not allowed, for the first time in decades, to visit St. Pierre last summer. A vessel was arrested yesterday.

I am not one, ordinarily, for standing up and saying that we ought to take dramatic measures.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: I am not asking for a declaration of war. But I am asking, and asking soberly, and the Liberal Party is asking that the submarine negotiations cease today, the Air Canada Airbus negotiations cease today, and that we stand up for Canada. Will the Secretary of State do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, let me try to cut through some of this hysteria to place the facts—