

Supply

Mr. Kilgour: The seals, Barbara, the seals.

Mrs. McDougall: What is going to have an impact on this ultimately is if we can convince the Europeans that it is in their own self-interest, it is their fish that are going to disappear as well as ours. That seems to be the only thing that is going to have an impact, particularly on the Portuguese.

The retiring Spanish ambassador, when he left to go back to Spain before taking a new assignment, was clearly quite shaken up by the information that we had presented to him. He said that in his view, and he would be advising his government, that it was essential that we bring this issue to a resolution.

In terms of the ad in the newspaper this week, I agree with the hon. member. We are looking at the issue of seals. We need more data. We understand the fundamental principle and we agree with her conclusion on this. We do need some more data on this. But the ad itself was very offensive and I absolutely agree with her.

Mr. George S. Baker (Gander—Grand Falls): A very short question, Mr. Speaker.

Presently there are two factory freezer trawlers from St. Malo, France heading across the Atlantic to fish. One of them will fish the northern cod stock, the second will fish the cod stock in the gulf.

As the minister knows, March 30, the end of this month, all French vessels were supposed to lose their quotas of northern cod and also cod in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, lose it totally. However, the Department of External Affairs, in consultation with the tribunal meeting in New York on the boundary dispute between Canada and France, St. Pierre and Miquelon, the Canadian government informed the tribunal that it will not accept a decision in French only.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Why, we are bilingual.

Mr. Baker: France, of course, under international law would accept the decision in one language, as any other government would, but the Department of External Affairs was adamant. The registrar of the court informed external affairs that because of that it would take four days into the month of April to deliver the decision. This meant that because of the four days Canada has now

given France an additional three months of quota of northern cod and cod in the gulf.

I ask the minister to respond and to tell us why the Canadian government did not really feel like following international law and just gave away three months of additional quota to France and they are sending over the factory freezer trawlers when she stands up in the House and says: "We are concerned about northern cod and cod in the gulf"?

• (1700)

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, the decision has not yet been written and Canada has not asked that the decision when it is written be translated, even though, as the hon. member knows, it is the practice of this government that we always work in two official languages. I hope he is not trying to turn this into a language dispute as well as a fish dispute. It is serious enough.

The boundary tribunal will issue its decision this spring. Consistent with the agreement the French quota in 2J-3K-L will be reduced in the same proportion as reductions that affect the Canadian offshore fleet.

The hon. member knows that this is pursuant to an agreement that was signed by a Liberal government, and it is an international treaty that has been very difficult for us to live with.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like to seek unanimous consent to extend the question and comment period a little longer so that we can have the benefit of the presence of Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is there unanimous consent to extend the period?

Some hon. members: Yes.

An hon. member: No.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Who said no, the minister?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, my point of order of course is one of fairness. This morning the minister of fisheries took an extra half hour to respond to questions on this issue. The only minister more central to this question than the minister of fisheries is the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I am sure that she, who said no to the request for unanimous consent in the last 30 seconds, will want to reconsider. We would like to have the benefit of her knowledge on this issue.