

S.O. 29

Mr. Comeau: The Machiavelli of Liberal politics, the next campaign chairman for the Liberal Party with Gordon Cummings—

Mr. Forrestall: The next Rainmaker.

Mr. Comeau: The next Rainmaker, of course.

In conclusion, and I will not take too much of the House's time, I would suggest that the fearmongers who stood up tonight and tried to spread fear in the heart of Atlantic Canadians should be ashamed of themselves. I wish to paraphrase my friend, the Hon. Member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, that as an Atlantic Canadian I am not afraid to speak on behalf of the fishermen of Atlantic Canada. If I think that the Government is doing something wrong for the fishermen of Atlantic Canada, I am not afraid to stand up and say so publicly. If these members of the Liberal Party from Atlantic Canada were here tonight listening to this, I would challenge them as well. I am not afraid to speak on behalf of Atlantic Canada. I will continue to do so. Like my friend from Bonavista—Trinity—Conception, I have not been told what to say. I am saying what I believe in.

I wish I had the gift of words of my friend who spoke tonight straight from the heart, and that I were able to deliver the type of speech that he gave. But I recommend to Rambo Broadbent, who was not here to listen to the Hon. Member from Newfoundland and the speech that he gave, that he read that speech and learn something about Atlantic Canada, what it means to be an Atlantic Canadian, and what it means to speak on behalf of our people in Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting evening, but I am sure we occasionally wonder why we do this to ourselves and we drag the point on often beyond where it makes sense. Unfortunately, today we have been dealing with a very serious problem through the mechanism of an emergency debate. There is no doubt that at some point a serious problem can always be examined from 500 different directions. Somebody has to grab the thing by the face and begin the process of solving it. It appears that this is what the Government did this week. There really had to be some type of movement toward a solution of the dilemma at St. Pierre and Miquelon.

The Conservative Government has undertaken that task and, for better or worse, we will hopefully move forward to a satisfactory solution for Canadians, or at least an interim solution that will lead us to some form of decent and equitable arrangement where Canadians are not deprived of resources which truly are theirs, and which we all in the House feel belong to Canada.

The issue with St. Pierre and Miquelon extends back to the last vestiges of the colonial process of France. If my history serves me, at the end of the Napoleonic wars France's colonies were stripped and she was left with two small pieces in Canada to exploit our fisheries in St. Pierre and Miquelon. It is

unfortunate that we in this generation have inherited that problem which simply will not go away.

We heard the Conservatives blast the Liberals in the House tonight for beginning the process of trying to make some agreements with France. France has fought very hard to maintain its economic stake in the gulf fishery, and to extract the wealth from it. At the time when Canada pushed the 200 mile limit forward there was a need to begin the process of making agreements with foreign nations that fished our Atlantic coast. That process began; the initial agreements were certainly unacceptable. What happened was that is over a long period of time the process has moved forward of trying to limit more and more the incursions by those foreign fleets into areas we claimed. That has been coming about.

As the Liberal Government passed away in 1984, the task of resolving one of the toughest problems in the Atlantic area fell upon the Conservative Government. There were some interesting aspects of it. I happened to be looking over some previous speeches made in this place a year ago about the problem with the factory freezer trawler. At the time, France had very large factory freezer fleet intentions in the area. When we came to the point of moving forward, I would suggest without adequate consultation although others would argue that there was adequate consultation, I found, when reading some old speeches in here, that we had harmed ourselves by moving forward quickly with the factory freezer trawler effort on our part. We had set a precedent where France was entitled to go ahead and do it. Our attempts to seek an arbitrated effort not to have France do it seemed ridiculous after we had approved that technology. Since Canada could use it in our areas, therefore, France reasoned, why should they not be able to? The problem of setting precedents by moving too quickly caused us some problem.

It has been some time now that I have moved into other areas as fisheries critic, but it seemed to me that some time ago Premier Peckford was very concerned about having more access into the northern cod stocks. On numerous occasions he spoke to the Government about the possibility of a mid-shore fleet, a fleet that would be able to move in and begin to harvest that resource and use more of it to work for the people of Newfoundland.

It is unfortunate that we find ourselves tonight more than slightly ahead of ourselves and having to seize a very nasty problem and move forward with it, without having dealt with the requests of Newfoundland to move in and harvest those stocks, so that Newfoundland might not feel so completely deprived by this agreement. Had several things moved forward, maybe with a little more caution on the factory freezer trawler issue, maybe with assistance in developing that mid-shore fleet and access to the northern cod stocks, at this time when we find ourselves in need of national consensus to deal with a nation like France, a tough, hard bargainer in any forum, had we taken those types of procedures earlier, we may not have been faced with the potential for a serious split in national consensus that we do need.