

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) has a number of interesting points to mention to the House this evening. Perhaps before drawing conclusions too early in the debate the Hon. Member would set out the fact pattern upon which some conclusions might or might not be drawn later.

Mr. Broadbent: If the Minister says that he was not smiling, then maybe it was just the perpetual smirk that is on his face, and I will take back what I said. In looking at the Minister, that is exactly what I thought he was doing. If he says he was not, then I will accept his word for it.

What I will not withdraw is my accusation that he has just participated in the Government decision that has sold out the interests of his own province, and he can reply to that.

Before the Minister rose to his feet I was saying that a Government with a sense of self-respect would have made a serious attempt to negotiate a settlement. We did that. When the French did not accept our arguments, it would have proposed that we refer it to a third party. We did that. If the French do not agree, rather than giving them additional fishing rights somewhere else in our territory, which this Government has absurdly done, we ought to have done with the French what we did with the Spanish trawler not long ago.

Without firing a shot or being in any sense warlike, but in the sense of protecting our own sovereignty, we should have used our Coast Guard in order to enforce our territorial integrity. That is what we should have done.

Mr. Crosbie: What a bluff.

Mr. Broadbent: Oh, what a bluff? This Government does not know what a bluff is. Every time it has a battle with the United States, France, or any other country, it gives in completely to what the other side wants. What I am saying is that ought to have been the next step. I say that with seriousness. I am talking about a well understood and traditional ally of Canada, and also a country with an international reputation for not yielding to anyone in any flexible negotiating way, and there should be no illusions about that.

The French Government might then have seen that we were serious, if we had taken some of their vessels actually under our control to enforce our sovereignty. The French perhaps would have gone very fast at that moment to get an international settlement. That ought to have been the route.

What did this Government do instead? Instead of standing up with some sense of self-respect for our own integrity, the Government said to the French Government, "We will give you some fishing rights in part of our waters, which no one disputes are our waters, and where we have curtailed the fishing rights to our own fishermen for conservation reasons. We will allow you to go into these waters". That is brilliant bargaining. That is what the Government has done.

Mr. Rodriguez: That's tough bargaining.

Mr. Blaikie: Chamberlain diplomacy.

Mr. Broadbent: Not only is it bad in principle as an approach to enforcing our own territorial integrity, it is also in flat contradiction of the wishes of the Government of Newfoundland. After the news of the accord came out yesterday and we raised questions in the House, I phoned the Premier of Newfoundland. I say to my hon. colleagues in the House that I do not claim to have a great deal of expertise in the details of the fishery. I have done some checking, and I hope what I am saying now is accurate. I am totally convinced that what I am saying about the international bargaining process is accurate. I phoned the Premier of Newfoundland and asked him his opinion about what conceivably could lie behind this. I wish to say to my hon. friends on the other side of the House that he was at a loss.

What he did tell me in that conversation was that he, as the Premier of Newfoundland, before Christmas wrote a detailed letter to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), the leader of the national Government, which made it very clear from the point of view of the Government of Newfoundland, which is the province most directly affected, that there were to be no additional concessions in terms of fishing rights in any other waters as an attempt to resolve the St. Pierre and Miquelon conflict.

• (2020)

If the Government wanted a co-operative attitude with any Government in the country when the economic foundation of the province was in question, it would listen to the provincial Government of the area. Surely it would do that if co-operation in the federal system means anything. The Premier made clear to the Government of Canada, on a Premier-Prime Minister basis, right before Christmas, that there was to be no concession.

Just before that time the Government of Newfoundland, the industry, and the fishermen were party to ongoing talks and negotiations. Suddenly they were cut out and meetings took place in which they did not participate. Then last week officials from the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans went to France to sign this incredibly unacceptable deal with the Government of France.

It is pretty clear why they were cut out of the negotiations. If the federal Government had continued to have as part of its negotiating team, as it ought to have had in the circumstances, representatives of the Government and people of Newfoundland, it could not have made the kind of deal it did. The federal Government knew that, because the Premier of Newfoundland had made clear to the Prime Minister before Christmas that any new territorial concessions for fishing rights were not acceptable to the Government of Newfoundland, and correctly not acceptable. Giving the Government of France additional territory in one part of the fishery in order to resolve a conflict in another must be about the stupidest kind of bargaining one could ever imagine.