

Oral Questions

which will mean that Atlantic Canadian fishermen will never get a fair agreement from the international arbitration?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, that too is a rather senseless question.

Mr. Flemming, the former Liberal candidate and Trudeau staffer, Halifax lawyer, and admiralty law expert, said that:

—the initial loss to Canada may be necessary in order to arrive at a long-term agreement with the French over waters around St. Pierre-Miquelon, where nine French trawlers will operate under Canadian licences.

That was the statement of a former Liberal candidate and staffer—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands.

CANADA-FRANCE RELATIONSHIP

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): My question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries. Premier Peckford has pointed out that granting rights to France for northern cod has created a very unhealthy precedent which will open the way for countries like Spain and Portugal also to apply to have fishing rights in that area.

Considering this and all the other negative aspects of that agreement, the people of Atlantic Canada wish to know why the Minister and the Government are putting the interests of the relationship with France ahead of the interests of the relationship with the Premiers of Atlantic Canada, the people of Atlantic Canada, and the fishing industry of Atlantic Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Again, that is not the case. If we cannot agree to terms of reference to refer the question of the St. Pierre and Miquelon boundary issue to compulsory third party arbitration, and if both Governments cannot agree to fishing allocations during the period when that process is under way, and I might add that if the fishermen and the Governments of Atlantic Canada cannot accept those conditions, there will be no agreement. We will not sell out the interests of Atlantic fishermen for an agreement at any cost.

Mr. Tobin: You have already sold out.

QUOTA OBSERVANCE BY FRENCH TRAWLERS

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): I wish to ask the Minister why the Government concluded an agreement with France without ensuring that France would at least respect the quotas that had been established by Canada for its trawlers? Did we receive that type of assurance? If not, why not? If those quotas will not be respected, will this agreement be cancelled by the end of this year?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): The Hon. Member's question indicates his misunderstanding

of the situation. What we consider to be illegal overfishing France considers to be its right to fish in an area it claims as its sovereign territory. Thanks to the previous Government, that arrangement was approved.

The Hon. Member opposite and his colleagues seem to say that they would rather fight than negotiate, or they would prefer to see France continue to abuse that resource and take fish and income out of the mouths of Atlantic fishermen. We do not agree. We want to solve this problem once and for all for the benefit of Atlantic fishermen.

An Hon. Member: Stand up for Canada.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, AND OF MINISTER OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING, OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of Members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. John Savage, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for the Province of British Columbia.

I also wish to draw the attention of Members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Stanley B. Hagen, Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training for the Province of British Columbia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

PAROLE GRANTED DRUG TRAFFICKER

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. It concerns the serious allegations that improper political interference was used to obtain parole for convicted drug trafficker, Conrad Bouchard. Will the Minister immediately order a full and complete inquiry to determine whether there was political interference in this matter, and to ensure that the integrity of the National Parole Board has been maintained?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): I can advise the Hon. Member that I first became aware of these allegations on Monday. I immediately contacted the RCMP and the Chairman of the National Parole Board and asked them to look into these allegations. That is presently under way. As a matter of fact, it was under way on Monday.