

Oral Questions

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that never at any time did I accuse my predecessor, nor would I, of not having carried out his duties in a proper and efficient manner. Indeed, he did discharge his duties properly and efficiently.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): That's because he is not a lawyer.

Mr. Kelleher: Shortly after assuming office in July, 1986, I immediately had meetings with the then head of the RCMP and CSIS. I sat down and discussed liaison problems with them and the exchange of information.

An Hon. Member: They weren't listening, Jim.

Mr. Kelleher: On August 14, by written direction, I set up liaison committees and liaison officers, which has gone a great length to eliminate and minimize problems between the two services.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): How does the Minister then explain the problems in the service which continue to result from a lack of clarity on the part of the Government about what product it expects the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to deliver, and what assistance is it to receive from the RCMP in doing its job?

Mr. Beatty: I guess it must be a problem left to us by you.

Mr. Kaplan: You left it to us.

Mr. Rossi: You stand up and answer. You know all about it.

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat that in my opinion both services are carrying out their duties properly, efficiently, and are working together.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Efficiently! Wait a minute.

Mr. Kelleher: If the Hon. Member has specific instances of non co-operation and non-liaison, then I would appreciate receiving them. I will attend to solving them immediately.

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FISHERIES

CANADA-FRANCE DISPUTE—NORTHERN COD STOCK

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Good luck!

Mr. Rodriguez: I am fishing.

I wish to quote some comments which were made in an emergency debate in this House on January 28 by the Minister responsible for Newfoundland in this Government's Cabinet:

It is our fishing industry, it is our life in Newfoundland the same as the wheat fields are the life of Saskatchewan, or oil and gas might be the life of Alberta. That is why the Government of Newfoundland and the industry and union representatives should never have been left out of this last week.

Mr. Hees: Louder, John, louder.

An Hon. Member: Can't hear you, John.

Mr. Rodriguez: Now, Mr. Speaker, I have their attention. Now they agree, and the Minister was right. The northern cod stock is vital to the life of the people of Newfoundland. It is an extension of the people of Newfoundland.

Therefore, my question to the Minister is this. How does he reconcile what government representatives have said in the House, and what the Prime Minister put out in the statement issued by the Minister of Transport with respect to the importance of northern cod stocks—how does he reconcile those statements with the give-away of the northern cod stocks to France to the detriment of the best interests of the people of Newfoundland?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): I regret the fact that the Hon. Member did not quote a particular statement in order that I might focus on the essence of his allegation.

Mr. Broadbent: He did.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Are you deaf?

Mr. Siddon: I can assure the Hon. Member that the Government, unlike either of the two Parties opposite, believes in sincerely seeking solutions to difficult problems, solutions which often require difficult and protracted discussions.

I can assure the Hon. Member that I am absolutely confident that when a package is arrived at, under the capable leadership of Yves Fortier, the result of that solution will be good for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the fishermen, and all whose interests are affected.

RESULT OF TALKS—PROVINCIAL AGREEMENT REQUESTED

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): In light of the fact that we have experienced Liberal Governments which negotiated away the natural resources of the provinces behind the backs of the Premiers of the provinces, this Government is doing it right in front of the eyes of the Government of Newfoundland.

My supplementary question to the Minister is this. In light of what the Minister has said, is he prepared to give an assurance to the House, and to the people of Newfoundland, that no agreement will be entered into between France and Canada with respect to fisheries off the East Coast of Canada