

Oral Questions

quickly as I can and make an appropriate response to my hon. friend.

I know that Ambassador Reisman, who has been one of the most distinguished of Canada's public servants over some 40 years, and who culminated a brilliant career in the Public Service of Canada by negotiating the free trade agreement, has taken, understandably, exception to some of the very grave distortions and misleading personal attacks that have been made upon him and upon the free trade agreement.

Having said that, I happen to believe that one ought not to impugn the personal motives of anyone at any time. I will review the transcript in that light and respond to my hon. friend.

AGREEMENT TERMINATION CLAUSE—GOVERNMENT MANDATE

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Prime Minister at least for having the sense of responsibility to respond in that way.

I ask the Minister for International Trade to comment with respect to a statement which was made yesterday by Mr. Reisman to the effect that it could take three to five years' notice to get out of the free trade agreement. Are the Minister and her Government trying to freeze this country into a free trade arrangement for which they have absolutely no mandate whatsoever?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, again I say to the Hon. Member that the issue of our mandate is a curious one for the Opposition to raise.

There has been a Royal Commission on this issue that took two and a half years and cost some \$11 million. It recommended free trade. There was a Senate committee, two Senate committees if I recall, that had public discussion on the issue of free trade.

This Government was elected with a mandate to create jobs, which we have done, 960,000 new jobs, since we took office. Studies of the Economic Council and other studies have indicated that the free trade agreement and free trade will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. That is certainly a mandate that Canadians understand.

Mr. Riis: That is not what the Minister of Employment said.

Miss Carney: What they do not understand is the total lack of any alternative by the Hon. Member.

FISHERIES

CANADA-FRANCE DISPUTE—CANADIAN CLAIM TO 3PS ZONE WATERS

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, anyone listening to this Government stoutly defending France's right to do whatever it wishes in the 200-mile zone south of Newfoundland might well wonder what country this Government represents. The French can now catch all the fish they want. They can take all the minerals, oil and gas that they want. They can take the entire ocean floor and all the salt water as long as they remain within that 200-mile zone south of Newfoundland, according to this Government.

I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs this. Does he not realize that the Government's position weakens Canada's claim to these waters? Does he not agree that these are Canadian waters and that France has no more claim to them than do the Basques, the British, or the Vikings?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member is serious about his concerns he will know that the agreement that was signed giving ships flying French flags the right to be in the disputed zone was an agreement that was signed on June 21, 1984, by a Liberal Government of Canada. The Leader of the Liberal Party at that time was the Right Hon. John Turner. If he wants to know why Canada was put in that position, he should ask Mr. Turner about the Turner agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT REJECT FRANCE'S DEMANDS

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, this is not 1787, 1887, 1972 or 1984. This is 1987.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker: Now we agree on one point.

Any international court, according to the international precedent, would only give France an eight to ten-mile economic zone around St. Pierre and Miquelon for the use of the people of St. Pierre and Miquelon and nothing else, and the Minister knows it. I ask the Minister this. Will the Government today reject France's imperialistic demands and stand up for Canada?

[Translation]

Where is our Government? They are hiding under the diplomats' tables.

[English]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, not only is it 1987 but tomorrow is Hallowe'en.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!