

*Adjournment Debate*

improve fishery economic viability in existing communities.

Since January, the government has announced a \$584 million assistance program to Atlantic fisheries. This is comprised of a short term adjustment package with a commitment to spend up to \$130 million to assist employees in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland who are laid off because of a decline in the northern cod stocks, an additional \$28 million to improve surveillance and a \$426 million Fisheries Adjustment Program for Atlantic Canada that will implement a long term strategy for the fishing industry. That is the one that was announced on May 7.

These special programs will be in addition to the ongoing federal programs to assist in workforce adjustment, attracting other enterprises to Atlantic Canada in the pursuit of alternative employment opportunities.

In particular I would like to draw the member's attention to the Industrial Adjustment Service. This includes many programs to assist workforce adjustment in Atlantic fishing communities. Other measures include income support through unemployment insurance, training services, assistance in relocation, funding for community initiatives and assistance for workers 55 years of age or older.

The government has repeatedly demonstrated its concern with the fish stocks, industry conditions and the situation of individual fishermen and plant workers in Atlantic Canada.

• (1810)

Every year since 1985 the government has implemented special response measures specifically targeted to assist fishermen and plant workers affected by catch failures. The government has shown and continues to show compassion to individuals adversely affected by the conditions in the industry.

I might say, Madam Speaker, that if the hon. member could speak to his friends in the other place and have them pass Bill C-21 and put it into law that many of the complaints that he is making would be taken care of.

## IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina):** Madam Speaker, on March 7, 1990, I asked the Minister of Employment

and Immigration to take action to stop the backlog of refugee claimants from destroying the refugee determination system, that is, by eliminating the old backlog.

My question was as follows:

I would ask the minister whether, in view of the hardship visited on people for some years now, including the members of her own immigration staff, and in view of this added delay for which she is responsible through that guideline, she will direct her staff to prepare a speedy system for landing all persons in that backlog according to the basic criteria of health and security.

The minister of course declined but without addressing the problem of delay which I had raised.

I want now to point out that we face a new sort of impasse. There is the old backlog which was 85,000 people. There is a new backlog in the new system. The old and new backlogs together total more than the original.

Of the old backlog by April, which is the latest figures available to me, there were still about 70,000 cases to be heard. Of the new backlog, in only 15 months since January 1, 1989, there were 18,000 cases waiting to be heard. In other words, the total new backlog is 88,000 cases—3,000 more than it was a year and a half ago.

One source of this trouble is the system of double hearings in the new refugee determination system. There is the hearing for a credible basis. That is to say when it is decided whether the claimant has some evidence upon which the board at a later hearing might find a legitimate claim. Then there is the full board hearing.

The very effective screening outside the country, of which the department staff are very proud, is preventing most would-be claimants from even getting to Canada to claim refugee status. We find that over 95 per cent of those who enter this credible basis test are found positively to have one and are sent on to the next stage.

At the next stage, 75 per cent are found to be refugees. So the great majority of the claimants who are dealt with are examined twice. I think that this was not the original intent of this law, but it is the effect of this law.

The delays are growing very seriously. In the estimates for this department, it was projected that the delay between the making of a claim and having a final decision by the end will be of this year nine months. This