

Oral Questions

I attended a promotional effort in London last fall in connection with lobster. I expect that this problem will eventually be overcome, but it will take some time.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of International Trade in the absence of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The minister will know that federal scientists announced in St. John's today their latest findings, namely, that previous estimates of northern cod stocks were too high, and that the fishery is in even worse shape than they had projected earlier. Yet his bosom pal, the European fisheries minister, has called for yet one more study before they stop pillaging our fish stocks.

When is the government, and in particular the minister, going to take off the kid gloves and stand up for the fishermen and the plant workers, his fellow countrymen?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, long before the hon. gentleman came into this Chamber and long after he is gone from this Chamber I will be standing up for the fishermen of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Rather than this approach of alarm that the hon. gentleman is trying to spread, we are dealing with the problem. Today, there was a meeting of the Atlantic Groundfish Advisory Committee in St. John's so that the people who participate, and the press, could be fully briefed on the latest scientific information. It is an open process that our Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is involved in.

The new estimates confirm last year's assessment and the conclusion of the Harris panel. The 1983-84 year classes are now considered to be among the poorest ever seen. The spawning stock will decline in 1991 as these year classes mature.

However, there is a brighter note as well. The 1986-87 year classes appear much stronger in research surveys and could contribute significantly to stock rebuilding in 1992 and later years, if not extensively caught as juveniles.

These estimates now have to be confirmed through meetings with fishermen. Toward the end of the year there will be formal scientific advice for next year, at

which time the minister will discuss the options with Atlantic fisheries ministers, the industry and the unions.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, while he is standing up for fishermen, probably he could tell us this in relation to last week's aid package. He will know that in the 1986 FPI privatization agreement, provision was made to keep the plants at Trepassy in his riding, Gaultois and Grand Bank open.

Is the minister prepared to recommend to his colleagues in Cabinet that the community adjustment funding provided for in last week's package be applied to keep Trepassy, Grand Bank and Gaultois open under Clause 5 of that privatization agreement?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. gentleman that he was a member of a government that gave away 9,500 tonnes a year of prime northern cod within the Canadian 200-mile limit to the European community. This is the same hon. member who now abuses diplomatic representatives who come to the gallery of this House. He got up the other day and insulted those particular people.

Mr. Boudria: That is not proper.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, I am rather timorous. I get frightened and worried by the noise opposite.

With reference to community development funding, those communities can use those funds for any economic development in their communities, including using them to see whether the plants in their community can continue to operate, so long as they do not use them for operating subsidies. They can use them otherwise to try to ensure that the plants continue to operate under new ownership or other arrangements.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. I assume there is one across the way.

Since the Brundtland commission, the Federal Court, the National Task Force on the Environment and Economy and the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council have either ruled inclusion or called for legislated environmental review of cabinet policy, and since in the last few days Canadians have been shocked to learn that