

Oral Questions

It is time that the Government called on provincial Governments and demanded that they pass on the benefits to which disabled Canadians are entitled.

* * *

[Translation]

DISASTERS

DEATHS OF FISHERMEN IN ACADIA

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, for the second time in three weeks, the sea has claimed victims. Late Sunday night and early Monday morning, four fishermen from our region saw their ship sink and subsequently drowned. They were fishing herring off the coast of Escuminac, near the mouth of the Miramichi River.

The bodies of Joachim Chevarie, Olivier Frigault and Fernand Ouellette were picked up out of the water, but the body of Joseph Vautour, the captain, has not been found.

I knew Joseph Vautour well. A brave man like all fishermen in my region who must wrest a living from the sea. This tragedy reminds us of the conditions under which fishermen must work to earn a living. Danger is a constant companion.

It is with profound sadness that I offer the bereaved families my condolences and the condolences of those around me. These families will be going through some difficult moments, and I wish them all the courage they will need to overcome this ordeal.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

HEALTH

AIDS DISEASE—NATION-WIDE SCHOOL PROGRAM PROPOSED

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, to my amazement, the Minister of National Health and Welfare said in Vancouver that any AIDS campaign in high schools is "in their provincial jurisdiction". In reply to that I said in Vancouver that AIDS did not respect provincial boundaries.

Will the Prime Minister not agree that a nation-wide school program is needed because it is a national concern, and not just a concern of 10 provincial education ministries?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I agree completely it is a problem that is national in concern and that it deserves a national commitment by all levels of Government and by all people in Canada who are interested in dealing with a very serious not only medical but social problem which deserves our greatest commitment.

• (1420)

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER MOBILIZE NATIONAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am glad of that response and I want to follow it up. The Prime Minister knows that AIDS is not only a national but an international plague. I am deeply disturbed by the prudish attitude of many Canadians. There is a fear that the political backlash is preventing an all-out national attack on AIDS.

I am not interested in academic arguments about what is appropriate on television or in the print media. I am sure we can find the right ethical message. Will the Prime Minister not intervene with the Minister and with all provincial Governments to mobilize a national strategy and campaign for educating Canadians, and particularly younger Canadians, to prevent the spread of AIDS in Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understand what the Leader of the Opposition means when he refers to the prudish attitude of Canadians.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Some Canadians, I said.

Mr. Mulroney: Some Canadians. I suppose it is always the case in a pluralistic society that some of us are more prudish than others.

In regard to the question he has raised, I agree with my right hon. friend that this is a matter of grave national consequence. I raised it with President Reagan at the summit here because of the international research implications. The Secretary of State for External Affairs and I will be attempting to lock in other nations to both research and methods of arresting the spread of this debilitating and killer disease. It is a human problem that deserves the resolve of the nation to try to bring it to a halt.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Prime Minister raised the issue with the President. If he would raise it now with the Minister of National Health and Welfare, we may get somewhere. It is an urgent issue.

[Translation]

ELABORATION OF NATIONAL STRATEGY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about preventing the spread of AIDS. Some community groups have said quite clearly that the Government of Canada is not setting up a campaign or a national strategy to prevent AIDS and to prevent its spread. Once again, I want to ask the Prime Minister when this national strategy organized by the Department of National Health and Welfare will see the light of day and when this campaign will be launched with the necessary dispatch and in a manner that is visible and concrete?