

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 21, 1988

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

LABRADOR FISHERMEN'S BENEFITS—REQUEST FOR EXTENSION

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I have sent the following letter to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Ms. McDougall):

Fishermen and plant workers on the Labrador coast feel that they are discriminated against under the U.I. regulations. The benefit period now ends May 15. Yet ice is in the bays on the Labrador coast until the end of June. During that time it is impossible for fishermen to fish and, therefore, for plant workers to work . . .

. . . Labrador fishermen feel they are economically punished because of a fact of geography. Through no fault of their own and because of forces beyond their, or anybody else's, control they are without income for six weeks every year.

What other group in Canada is systematically denied income every year simply because of geography?

. . . In the long term what is needed is an income support plan for fishermen separate altogether from U.I. But until such time as that is introduced we must make U.I. work, inadequate as it is.

The fishermen on the Labrador coast are among the most disadvantaged in Canada. They have struggled for centuries to eke out a living . . . But the fact remains that at the present they need a cash income during the winter months including the period from May 15 to June 30. The fishermen of Labrador are asking for simple justice when they ask for the extension of U.I. to the end of June.

[*Translation*]

GENERAL ELECTION

TERREBONNE CONSTITUENCY—CHOICE OF THE FUTURE

Mr. Jean-Marc Robitaille (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the people of Terrebonne for the confidence they showed in me on November 21. By giving me a majority vote, they also gave a majority vote to the Progressive Conservative Government and its extraordinary leader, the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). For the second time in a row, the men and women of Terrebonne elected a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. I shall endeavour to live up to the confidence they have shown in me.

The people of Terrebonne wanted someone who knows where he stands. They did not want a Liberal or a socialist, Mr. Speaker, as neither party knows where it stands. The people of Terrebonne, like the rest of Canada, showed great political savvy by refusing to give in to the unfair scare tactics used by the Liberals and the socialists.

The people of Terrebonne, in their unbounded wisdom, intelligence and self-assurance, chose the way of the future. The people of Terrebonne, Mr. Speaker, chose the way of free trade because they know that it will be good for them. We, the Conservative Party, know where we stand, and we shall keep our word.

* * *

[*English*]

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED HIGH-SPEED COMMUTER RAIL NETWORK AROUND CITIES

Mr. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, once the free trade legislation has been enacted, the Government must quickly turn its attention to the problems of Canada's urban frontiers, our cities.