

Oral Questions

What is the government going to do to help these fishermen? What is the government going to do to give these fishermen some confidence that their government is concerned about them? Will the government please do something soon, such as a price stabilization plan? This group of people is waiting for the Government of Canada to act on their behalf.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I think the hon. member knows, my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has already announced a program that, among other things, is designed to try to assist the marketing of Canadian lobsters overseas even more than has been done in the past.

We have encouraged the formation of the Canadian Atlantic Lobster Promotion Association for generic image and quality promotion. We intend to act in other ways that will help Canadian lobster fishermen find new and durable markets for their catch.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the lobster fishermen are into the season now. They are faced with this restricted market.

Also, this marketing program that the minister mentions applies to New Brunswick and P.E.I. It does not apply to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. These two provinces are having a particularly difficult time right now.

At a time when the fishery in general is in difficulty, when the markets have been cut back, and when the prices have been low, why is the Government of Canada refusing to help these lobster fishermen?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as my previous answer indicated, we are not doing that; quite the contrary. We are faced with a situation in which we disagreed with the provisions that were being followed by the United States. We followed the options that were open to us. It happens that the panel that was established to hear this kind of matter ruled against us. There is a 90-day negotiating period that is now being followed.

In the meantime, my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, has announced a program that we think will be helpful to find new markets for Canadian lobster fishermen. We are pursuing actively actions that will help ensure new and durable markets for the

Canadian lobster fishermen in consultation with representatives of that industry.

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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, in Canada there are 1.6 million children living below the poverty line. In Nova Scotia, not one child living on social assistance receives adequate food allowances to meet nutritional needs. In March, the government rejected a children's bill of rights.

Since the Prime Minister today signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, could the Acting Prime Minister tell Canadians just what his government's commitment is to adequate food, clothing, and shelter for children in Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member finding an occasion to draw to the attention of the House of Commons the very important action taken today by the Prime Minister in signing the convention today on Canada's behalf.

The hon. member will know that, internationally and at home, the government has attached a very high priority, not only to the care of children, but also to the rights of children, as was indicated in this document.

She will know that among the actions that have been carried out internationally within the direct jurisdiction of the government have been a number of actions, for example, to contribute to the immunization of children against diseases. Prior to that program, those diseases had ravaged the lives of thousands of children in the world.

We are following similarly active programs at home to help Canadian children in need.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I think that the clawback on family allowances, the lack of a child care program from the government, the EPF transfer payments, and the cap on CAP—to name just a few—indicate just what a high priority the government puts on children's rights in Canada.

Will the Acting Prime Minister acknowledge that, in fact, signing conventions does not necessarily mean real action when it comes to the needs of Canadian children and would he tell us what he plans to do?