

constructive and helpful. It costs the taxpayers but we believe in fairness and social justice. We will continue to do a lot for Atlantic Canada.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, we have one region in crisis on the east coast and others are beginning to crumble.

On January 18 Cominco announced the closing of the Sullivan Mine at Kimberly, British Columbia, leaving a town of 6,000 without a future. Cominco received \$79 million in federal funds. Canadians want to know why their tax dollars are being given to corporations that turn around and give workers a pink slip.

What steps will the government take to ensure that Cominco is accountable for these public funds and how will it assist these workers who are out of a job today?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that when she refers to the Cominco smelter in Trail and the agreement that was signed between this government, the province of British Columbia and Cominco, that the NDP, including the unions, were saying that that deal was absolutely essential for the maintenance of the Cominco operations in the interior of B.C.

That Cominco smelter had one of the highest costs of production prior to that investment. Today it has one of the lowest world-wide costs of production. The situation now is that when you look at zinc prices, when you take a look at the ability to maintain jobs, that plant in Trail has been guaranteed into the next century.

With respect to the Sullivan mine, a meeting was held yesterday. All of us recognized that the Sullivan mine was going to close some time in the 1990s because of the ore body. Yesterday, as a result of the meeting which took place, and obviously it is regrettable in respect of Sullivan, the mine will be maintained in the sense that if zinc prices go up, Cominco can consider its reopening at a later date. If you keep on opposing the Trail smelter and the investment by this government in the future of

B.C., those jobs will be lost as well. You should reconsider the policy which you have.

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FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister who yesterday indicated that he had received from the President of the European Community an offer which would deal with the Portuguese and Spanish overfishing. Will he now agree to table his exchange of correspondence with Mr. Delors? Can he tell us how the government plans to respond to Mr. Delors' offer? Does he have an undertaking that the European Community will abide by the NAFO quotas while Mr. Delors' offer is being pursued?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the very encouraging development that was referred to yesterday was that, breaking from past practice by the European Community, President Delors responded in a way that made it clear that there is the possibility of further progress to be made through negotiation.

As one more indication of the willingness of the commission, as a result of diplomatic activities undertaken by my colleague the Minister for International Trade and others to move forward on some of these issues, the Community is sending its commissioner responsible for fisheries, Mr. Marin, to Canada in the next several weeks. We expect to discuss matters with him then. Undoubtedly there will be the opportunity and there may very well be the necessity for a meeting between the Prime Minister and President Delors. If that is necessary to move forward Canada's interest in the fishery, the Prime Minister will certainly meet Mr. Delors and make our case very vigorously.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister. As he will know, this problem of foreign overfishing began in 1985. The figures will show that it is a matter that got out of hand since this government came into power because the Prime Minister refused to stand up to the Europeans. He let them walk all over us as a consequence.