

With respect to the problem in agriculture, there was an announcement made by the Deputy Prime Minister last week that up to \$500 million would be available to provide assistance to farmers in 1990, contingent on provincial participation.

Why provincial participation? Because the provinces, of course, share constitutional jurisdiction over agriculture with the Government of Canada.

I would like to point out to the Leader of the Opposition something he may not know. In 1988-89, the total federal spending on agriculture was almost two and a half times that of all the provinces combined. Thus there can be no argument that we are not doing our share in helping to meet the needs of the agricultural sector, particularly when we recognize the financial difficulties that face the Government of Canada as it faces the provinces. Unfortunately, our position is even a more stringent one than theirs when you look at the proportion of our revenue that goes to service the debt.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the minister in his answer for the government totally overlooks the fact that in the coming year, realized net incomes are forecast to drop 54 per cent in Alberta, 87 per cent in Manitoba and 101 per cent in Saskatchewan.

Under these circumstances where does the minister think the provinces in question, especially Saskatchewan, are going to get the funds to match the federal offer?

What he is saying is totally unrealistic and overlooks the federal role in the matter, especially with the international causes of some of these problems.

I want to give the minister a chance to see if he can do any better when it comes to an answer to a question about the fisheries.

In its throne speech of April 3, 1989—one year ago tomorrow—the government pledged to reduce predatory overfishing. Yet, whenever the issue of foreign overfishing has come up in the past year, whether it is caused by the Americans, the Portuguese or the French, the government has totally failed to accept the fact that foreign overfishing has anything to do with the crisis in the east coast fishery.

In the just released report commissioned by the government, Dr. Harris states: "Given the near desper-

ate state of the inshore fishery along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, there should be no question of foreign allocations". Dr. Harris went on to say:

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. member please put his question?

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): "All foreign overfishing within the 200-mile zone should be terminated at the earliest possible date and there should be an immediate reduction in the level of foreign overfishing".

Does the government accept that recommendation? If not, why not? If yes, why will the government not announce today an end to all foreign overfishing in Canadian waters?

• (1420)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, where is the member for Gander—Twillingate when the members need him?

This was a two-sided question. With respect to agriculture, the problems are not caused just by an international trade war, although that is certainly one of the causes. The causes of the problem include drought, debt, increased costs, prices continuing before trend lines, and the like. The Government of Canada is prepared to be flexible with respect to how the \$500 million it is allocating can be spent and for what programs it can be used.

With respect to the question of the fishery, the present Government of Canada recognized before Mr. Harris was even appointed the problem we had from overfishing in the nose and tail of the Grand Banks, particularly by the European Community.

Mr. Robichaud: What have you done about it?

Mr. Crosbie: What we have done about it is lead a vigorous international campaign that had quite substantial results. Last fall, at the meeting of NAFO—

Mr. Robichaud: And they're still overfishing.

Mr. Crosbie: That campaign is being continued. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and I are visiting the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the European Community in Ireland on Wednesday for a meeting on this very subject.