

*The Address*

In order to reach this objective, the government should apply business methods to the fishing industry; in other words, it should bring the sales operation closer to the harvesting operation.

If all the steps or all the links in the industrial chain are respected, fishermen will be able to sell everything they catch. At present, they depend on overspecialized plants and as a result what they harvest is overspecialized.

In the past, the government pinned all its hopes on harvesting the natural resource. Today, we must rely on human resources, the grey matter of the people in the communities, to make more money while being more respectful of the marine resource. These people are familiar with the problems, they have solutions. Is the government prepared to support their efforts?

These communities need concrete measures like those put forward by the Bloc during the election campaign, which I will list. One such measure was the creation of landing warehouses, in order to group together underutilized species and promote the sale of fish turned down by traditional plants.

The second measure put forward by the Bloc was the creation of a provincial clearinghouse to implement the logistics of transportation to the various markets because they will be new.

The third measure, which I will mention but about which I will be speaking again later, was returning the management of fishing licences to the provinces.

What I mean to say is that the government, instead of looking to the future, set up short focus programs that did not address existing problems. Meanwhile, the situation has deteriorated and workers have found themselves without work.

• (1135)

The government is proposing pointless training programs. Rather than forcing workers to bend over backwards to meet the requirements of these programs, we should be listening to them and taking their tastes and their skills into consideration. We have to rely on people's experience and help them to put their ideas into practice. It is up to Ottawa to understand how people think, not the other way around. As I said during my election campaign, there is a local solution to a local problem. Real solutions will not come from Ottawa.

However, a transition period is necessary in order to revitalize industry. Since it was the government that allowed the situation to get worse over the years, it is up to the government, if it wants to be a responsible government, to support the people who are now unemployed. The current minister of fisheries has already

made an attempt to simplify access to assistance programs for workers in the industry. It is a step in the right direction.

However, a great deal remains to be done. Words are wasted on a starving man. Throughout this transition period, the government must make sure that the people affected have bread and butter on the table. It is not the fault of the people in the coastal communities if the previous federal government preferred to waste public funds rather than investing in projects that would create jobs. Coastal communities are in shock. Now is not the time to let them down and force the residents to find a job that does not correspond to either their inclinations or their skills.

Those who live in coastal communities have passed on their fishing practices from father to son, from mother to daughter, and have never had to change their way of doing things.

The Gaspé poet, Maurice Joncas, described their lives in the song "*Les expropriés de Forillon*":

Their universe was filled with these: Fishing boats upon the seas, Trees to fell in winter snow, Pleasures that were theirs to know.

I think these lines are a fitting description of past life in the communities which now, because of the federal government's management mistakes, have been turned upside down. For them, life will never be the same. They have to reinvent a way of life. All this cannot be done by waving a magic wand, and the government must respect the rate at which the communities are able to adapt. This revolution requires that the various levels of government give the coastal communities new development tools.

These tools will have to enable coastal communities to take stock of the human and natural resources in their surrounding area, because all too often the government has acted unilaterally.

Now is not the time to boast and brag about the merits of federalism. We really have to work together and ensure that the coastal communities feel they are full partners in the enormous changes to come, changes that affect them. It would be irresponsible to act otherwise.

The appalling collapse of the Atlantic fish stocks is the direct result of federal intervention in the fishery. The Liberal government does not have a spotless record in this area. Early in the 1980s, the Liberals gave out a large number of subsidies for shipbuilding that sometimes reached to 60 per cent of the price of the boat. They contributed to the current situation of overcapacity. Instead of diversifying the industry, the federal government of the day—we will see what the new one plans to do—made the problem worse.