

Oral Questions

In the course of the televised debates during the election campaign, the Prime Minister told Canadians that the trade deal was merely a commercial arrangement, cancellable on six months' notice. Since it is evident that the trade deal is only giving pink slips to hundreds of thousands of Canadians, is it not time for this government to give the pink slip to the United States?

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party does not want to talk about machinery and equipment. That apparently bugs her, as does much of the New Democratic Party bug her as well.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): You better talk to your mother, John and get some good advice.

Mr. Crosbie: I forgot to check with mommy.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, Oh!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Yukon.

[*Translation*]

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, this series of figures is cold comfort for the poor who are unemployed. People are not interested in statistics. People want work. They want a pay cheque, not welfare.

An Hon Member: Exactly!

Ms. McLaughlin: They want to feed their families and give them a comfortable future. They want to know what this government is going to do to find them a job so they can live in dignity.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, we have tremendous sympathy for all Canadians who become unemployed, whatever the circumstances. In fact, that is why the federal government has made broad-ranging retraining programs available to all workers. In August in Quebec, the unemployment rate was at its lowest in ten years. So far, since January 1, 216,000 new jobs, 73 per cent of which are full-time jobs, have been created, and 72 per cent of these jobs are held by women. Now that is progress! The Leader of the New Democratic Party should stop saying we are losing tens of thousands of jobs, because we are in fact creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs here in Canada.

[*English*]

FISHERIES

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for International Trade. The European countries fishing off our east coast continue to thumb their noses at us. We told the Europeans, through NAFO, that they could catch no cod at all off the coast of Newfoundland and the coast of Labrador. They say now that they are going to catch 27,000 tonnes this year. That is a job loss of 750 additional jobs because of European overfishing in eastern Canada.

The question is very simple: When is the government going to stop pussy-footing? When is the government going to get tough with the Europeans? When is the government going to do something to protect the jobs that are being raped by the Europeans off the east coast of Canada?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman knows that we have had an intensive campaign with respect to the European Community and its ignoring NAFO quotas in the last six months or a year with some considerable success.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Big success story, John.

Mr. Crosbie: The quotas that the European Community announced for itself yesterday are a very considerable improvement with reference to flatfish stocks, but still deficient in the area of the cod stocks that the hon. gentleman mentioned, but all in all, below the catches of last year and a very great improvement from previous years. It is still not good enough. We are still not satisfied, but it is a very considerable improvement.

When the hon. gentleman's government was in power in the 1960s and 1970s, the Europeans took 800,000 tonnes of cod from the North Atlantic: 800,000—not 27,000—and the hon. gentleman's government did nothing for 12 years to stop that. Now he suggests that we can somehow, by some miracle, do something to stop what the Liberals could not do when 800,000 tonnes a year was taken from the North Atlantic.