

**Mr. Henderson:** Yes, a very distinguished and articulate colleague. He has certainly pointed out the very severe situation in Atlantic Canada under this Government.

Consideration of this motion condemning the Government for its abandonment of the people of Atlantic Canada is certainly very appropriate given the situation today and what we have seen in the last few months. We in Atlantic Canada of course are fearful of what this Government holds in store for our region. I know some of my Atlantic colleagues on the other side also share our concern because they, too, go back to their ridings and regions on the weekends and I am sure their constituents are telling them exactly what they are telling us.

We in Atlantic Canada are facing a desperate situation. We come from a region which is very rich in history, culture and tradition. We have been proud, of course, of our accomplishments over the last number of years. We are equally proud of our way of life. We are very proud people when it comes to earning a living from the land and the sea. However, we who live in Atlantic Canada have found things extremely difficult in this last year or so. Conservative policies and priorities are not designed to foster prosperity in the Maritime provinces.

We see this Government reacting and responding to the needs of big business. Our area of the country does not have big businesses such as we see in Toronto, Montreal and some of the western provinces. Most of the businesses in our area employ from 3 to a maximum of 200 people, although very few businesses employ 200 people.

● (1140)

The Government's policies do not respect our heritage and life-style. As the Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall) stated, the Government's policies are likely to shrink our communities and our population. In my opinion, its policies will certainly not enrich our communities.

What does one do if one cannot find a job in one's home town or home province? I assume the Government is telling the young men and young women of this country that they should find a job elsewhere, in Ontario or out West. We went through that syndrome in the 1940s and 1950s. I was one of those who experienced it. I had to leave home at 16 years of age and hitch-hike to Toronto in order to find a job because there were no jobs in my region of my province. If I was able to find a job it was only for \$2 a day and I have the documentation to prove it. Furthermore, I was probably more fortunate than many others because I was single male.

While we are obviously not working for \$2 a day any more, wages have not improved very much in Atlantic Canada since then. It is not so much a question of money as the fact that there is no way to earn a living.

The private sector in Atlantic Canada is not a dominant force as it is in the rest of Canada. The Government must recognize this fact because it also applies to areas like northern Ontario and parts of the Province of Quebec. Not all of us live in the Mecca of the golden triangle in this country. My friend opposite, the chairman of the Quebec caucus, is nodding his

head in approval because he understands what I am trying to say.

Neither was the Province of Alberta always prosperous. I remember working in northern Alberta for very little money in the 1960s. However, at least I could find a job there. That is not the situation today.

As the Member of Parliament for Egmont, I receive many letters from my constituents and meet literally hundreds of people who come to my office looking for jobs. The Government's job creation strategy is not accomplishing what we want in Atlantic Canada. Let me read a letter that I received on November 16 from one of my constituents. It states:

Dear Mr. Henderson,

I am writing you concerning the unemployment problem in our district. I have been unemployed for one year. My U.I. benefits are running out at the end of the month.

I have been looking for work for one year and have not had any results. Most of the feedback I have received is that most of the projects are only for those receiving social assistance and therefore I am not available for work.

This bothers me very much as I am very willing to work and I cannot. I would like to know how you feel about this serious problem in our West Prince district as well as our country, and what else can I do?

I would appreciate if you would answer my letter. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Linda Ellis.

That letter is from Oleary, P.E.I.

That is one example of what is happening in my region. I am glad to see my colleague from the opposite side, the Hon. Member for Cardigan (Mr. Binns), in the House. If we want to admit it, I am sure he would agree that the situation is the same in his riding. The tobacco farmers were here yesterday demonstrating their plight. The farmers in my province are selling potatoes for 2 cents a pound, which is 3 cents to 3.5 cents a pound below the cost of production.

This weekend I witnessed something which I have never seen in my life. A farmer in my area went to a small general grocery store to deliver potatoes. He took in a 50 pound bag of potatoes for which the grocer paid him \$1.20. That is 2 cents a pound, plus 20 cents for the paper bag bearing the name "Product of P.E.I.". That farmer was accompanied by his 9 year old son, who wanted a couple of chocolate bars at the store. The farmer bought the chocolate bars for his son and it cost him \$1.20. I believe that puts the situation faced by farmers in this country and in my province into perspective.

The Government must do something about this. We are not here to act on a partisan basis because we must do the very best we can for the people who need the most help. We must point out to the Government that it is not addressing the real issues. It does not understand the plight of the farmer in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. It does not understand the employment situation.

Last month unemployment in my province went up two points, from 13.3 per cent to 15.3 per cent. While that is a provincial unemployment rate, I guarantee that the unemployment rate in my riding and in the riding of the Hon. Member