

Oral Questions

serve Halifax and Edmonton, too. This is the way it should be done. I will not reopen the bilateral agreement just for Ottawa. I am sorry, but it cannot be done.

* * *

ATLANTIC ECONOMY

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the senior minister from Atlantic Canada, the Minister for International Trade.

My colleague and I have just got back from visiting fishing communities in Newfoundland and heard first-hand about the crisis in Atlantic Canada.

Newfoundlanders think the Prime Minister does not listen and that the government does not care. We heard over and over that Newfoundlanders think that the Prime Minister sees them as expendable.

What the Prime Minister needs is an education on the crisis in Atlantic Canada. There is no point in sending the Minister for International Trade down there because he is just led down the garden path too easily.

When is the Prime Minister going to go to Trepassey, Grand Banks and St. John's to find out for himself what is going on in Atlantic Canada?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is very much involved in and concerned about the problems in the Atlantic fishery area. In due course he will be dealing with the question himself.

When he will be visiting Newfoundland will depend upon his schedule. He is visiting various parts of the country and receiving a very enthusiastic welcome wherever he goes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: With reference to the Atlantic fishery, hon. members might be interested to know that there has been a Canada-U.S.S.R. bilateral fisheries consultation, something which takes place annually, and several agreements have been reached with the U.S.S.R. that will be helpful to Atlantic fishermen, including an agreement for them to land and sell to Canadian plants the small volume of their by-catches of cod, haddock and pollock caught incidentally in the U.S.S.R. silver hake fishery, provided that commercially viable arrangements

can be made. This will provide fish plant workers with additional weeks of employment as a result.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: In addition, they have agreed to provide more cod for the Canadian fleet by transferring a portion of their southern Grand Bank cod quota in 3N0 to us that they receive from NAFO.

Some hon. members: Order!

Mr. Crosbie: You are either interested in the Atlantic fishery or you are not—obviously you are not with all of these interruptions.

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): So, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is going to go to Atlantic Canada to look at the crisis when he feels like it. Atlantic Canadians want him to go there now. When he goes there he will get the same response he got when he was in Brandon.

On December 13, the Prime Minister made a commitment to put \$1 billion into Atlantic Canada. He repeated that commitment on January 22.

The Prime Minister is preparing us for deep budget cuts, as is the Minister of Finance. Atlantic Canadians have seen the attack on UI, the GST and government inaction on the fishery.

When is the Prime Minister going to come clean on his commitment to Atlantic Canadians? When is he going to keep his promise? When is he going to do something about the crisis in Atlantic Canada?

• (1200)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, in all of the history of Canada the NDP has never done one single thing for Atlantic Canada, not one, except to send itinerant peddlars down to have a quick look around for a photo opportunity and then to come back and pretend that they know everything about Atlantic Canada. The hon. gentleman knows nothing about Atlantic Canada.

The Prime Minister does not need to visit Atlantic Canada because I visit Atlantic Canada, my colleague visits Atlantic Canada, other ministers visit Atlantic Canada. For example, when he visited to announce the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, he announced over \$1 billion worth of assistance to Atlantic Canada. This year is the historic high in the payment of regional development assistance in Atlantic Canada, \$500 million.