

policy although she knows full well that she cannot implement it. She then waffled. She said that fishermen, farmers and other people whose livelihoods depend upon weather information will be excluded. Opposition Members asked how they could be excluded. Were they going to get their social insurance numbers over the phone? How can they find out whether they are full-time fishermen? The Minister then waffled again saying that they were going to charge everybody.

That is a very dangerous policy, Mr. Speaker. Imagine a man about to go out in his boat at five o'clock in the morning. He wants a weather update because of fast-changing weather patterns. He is involving his own life and the lives of his crew. When there is a charge for making the phone call, no matter how low the charge is, the man will know that he is being charged extra for it and he will hesitate. He will not make as many calls as he made before. In fact, Mr. Speaker, our policy should be to encourage him to make more calls than he has normally made. Where was the consultation when that policy was introduced?

Where was the consultation when the Government unilaterally increased charges on fishermen's charts and cut back on the hydrographic service charting the coastline of Atlantic Canada? The charting of the waters of eastern Canada is absolutely necessary. Most of the charts for a certain section of the coastline of eastern Canada are Captain Cook's charts. They date back to the days of the old lead line. Five years ago the Government of Canada tried to institute a policy to update those charts. It wanted to spend more money on that service. However, without consultation, the new Government has increased the charges to fishermen and started to chop from that service.

Where was the consultation when the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a herring quota for this spring starting April 15 when every single harbour was frozen over? Where was the consultation when the Government announced it was going to cut back on UIC because it was examining the unemployment insurance scheme? That scheme provides a guaranteed income for the fishermen of eastern Canada and now the Government is tinkering with it with no consultation.

As this motion says, Mr. Speaker, the Government has been totally negligent and totally indifferent to the needs of fishermen in eastern Canada. The Government must start changing its policies or it will face the same fate as a lot of provincial Tory Governments will face when they are defeated in their next elections.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Are there any questions or comments? Resuming debate, the Hon. Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens).

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, in joining in this debate I would point out that the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) has addressed his remarks to only one aspect of the motion. The motion deals with regional industrial development, fisheries and transportation. If I were to rely on the remarks of the Hon. Member, I could only presume that he is

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reasonably happy with regard to regional industrial development in Atlantic Canada because he did not single out anything for criticism in that field.

**Mr. Baker:** That's not true, Mr. Speaker. That's not fair.

**Mr. Stevens:** He must be reasonably happy with regard to transportation as well. I am pleased to hear that because we feel that we can indicate some optimism with respect to Atlantic Canada. We can indicate that matters have improved greatly.

However, we must approach this debate with a word of caution, Mr. Speaker. When I read the wording of this motion I was rather startled to find that a representative of the Official Opposition would be so bold as to suggest that he would like to have a debate on the issues of regional industrial development, fisheries and transportation in Atlantic Canada when their record as a government over the previous 10 years was such an utter disaster. Others joining in this debate must remember what we inherited from the previous Government.

The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council did a recent study of which I was given a copy. The study included a contrast between Atlantic Canada and the states which make up the New England states. I invite all Members who are interested in the debate today to get a copy of that study. It shows that in 1975, when the Hon. Member's Party was in power, unemployment in the New England states was higher, on average, than unemployment in Atlantic Canada. By 1984 unemployment in Atlantic Canada had gone up by about 50 per cent from 1975. In the six New England states unemployment had been cut in half. During that 10-year period the average incomes of residents of Atlantic Canada were a constant 75 per cent of the national average income. I find that unfortunate. We in this Party believe that average incomes in Atlantic Canada can be much closer to the national average than has been the case over the previous years.

What happened in the New England states? We find that during the same period they had a net increase of about 10 per cent in their state products as related to the national average. This is a second barometer which indicates how unfortunate the previous Government's policies directed towards Atlantic Canada have been. I say that notwithstanding the fact that there have been literally hundreds of millions of dollars poured into Atlantic Canada in the form of subsidies, grants and other approaches.

● (1230)

Don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker. We are acknowledging and will continue to acknowledge that in an area such as Atlantic Canada there is room for Government assistance, whether it is a grant, an incentive or a subsidy. What we are saying, however, is that the Official Opposition in the House today has absolutely nothing to teach the people of Canada about solving the problems of Atlantic Canada. Whatever they felt were the solutions for Atlantic Canada in their term of office, we know that their solutions did not work. The people