

Adjournment Debate

overfishing to go on five years without a peep from this Prime Minister, and five years later he can stand there and say there is no crisis?

I hear the neat little distinction he makes. There is a crisis in the fishery but there is not a crisis in Atlantic Canada. Where does he think the fishery is? Who does he think shipped 80 per cent of our groundfish, caught it and shipped it before he wiped it out by letting the foreigners walk all over us?

• (1910)

Of course any crisis in the fishery is a crisis in Atlantic Canada. The problem is that he is not here. I understand that. He is a busy man.

The Minister for International Trade should be here responding to this issue. Where is the gentleman from St. John's West? The member for Winnipeg South is going to respond to this fishing issue, this overfishing issue? What an insult to the people of Atlantic Canada.

Where is the parliamentary secretary for fisheries? Where is the minister of fisheries? Where is the Minister for International Trade and all the other people who have the solutions to this terrible problem? Are none of them here to tell us what the Prime Minister means when he says there is no crisis?

I will give the member for Winnipeg South some idea of the dimensions of this particular tragedy.

In one area of the zone that is controlled and monitored by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, NAFO, that organization recommended no fish be taken this year. Yet, the Spanish and the Portuguese, realizing just how cowardly and how spineless this government has been so far in dealing with foreign overfishing, have continued their pillage of fish stocks even when they were told that no fish should be taken. Do you realize that according to DFO figures last year that in 1989 there was a quota of 13,000 tonnes of cod set for them and they took 63,000 tonnes? They took almost five times what they were supposed to take.

Why is it that everybody except the Prime Minister knows there is a crisis? I will tell them why. It is because they are living through it: they in Gaultois, who are under threat of losing their homes, communities and

their loved ones, not to mention their jobs and their livelihood; they in Grand Bank; they on Shea Heights near St. John's; they in Trepassey; they in Canso, Nova Scotia; they in Lockeport, Nova Scotia. They know there is a crisis and all the baffle-gab and words from the Prime Minister today and all the fine written speeches like the one which I am sure we will hear in a minute, when I sit down, will not put groceries on tables in Gaultois, Grand Bank, Shea Heights and Trepassey.

Two of those areas are in the jurisdiction of the Minister for International Trade, the member for St. John's West. Why does he not convince his people that there is a crisis? I say to him that it is not for the lack of trying. I understand, John, you have done the best you can, but that is the real tragedy: nobody is listening to the junior minister for trade, nobody is listening to the member for St. John's West. Perhaps that is why they are not here. Perhaps they have given up altogether. That is the word back in Newfoundland and that might be the honourable thing for the gentleman for St. John's West to do.

More to the point, this is an unfolding national tragedy. This is a disgrace of international proportions that we should stand idly by as a Canadian government and allow the Spanish and the Portuguese, aided and abetted by the French, to wipe out entire stocks of groundfish and other species. They will not be there for future generations. They will not be there to be caught by the Spanish or by the Portuguese or by anybody. They will be gone. Why? Because this government, through its silence and lack of action, has stood idly by and aided and abetted that raping of our fish stocks, wiping out jobs in plants and wiping out jobs in boats.

I appeal to the government not to respond with another pre-scripted few words but to say to Atlantic fishermen and plant workers: "We hear your plea at last. There is a crisis and we are going to rise to it". If the government will say that and do that, I will be the first to rise and applaud government members.

Mrs. Dorothy Dobbie (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the hon. member opposite that the parliamentary secretary for fisheries has asked me to respond to this question because the