

government's relationship may not be the happiest in the world because of the history relating to the seal hunt. He then invited members of the opposition to work with NGOs. In fact, I think it was the member from Newfoundland to whom he mentioned that.

As the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood raises it, I would fully agree. All of us, as parliamentarians, ought to work with environmental groups that share this concern about the ecology in the north Atlantic to work with this concerted effort to focus on the real source of the problem.

One such organization, and I know it is not one that gets a lot of plaudits around here because of the history related to the seal hunt and so on, is the International Fund for Animal Welfare which has recently organized a fact-finding mission for some European parliamentarians so that they could then go back and work in Europe, not on the seal hunt, but on the underlying cause of the problem, which is the overfishing by Spain and Portugal. Why? Because the International Fund for Animal Welfare understands that the more this problem develops, the more the pressure will come. We are seeing it around here to find a scapegoat. And then it gets back to the whole thing going in reverse. It gets back into the seal hunt and then you get back into the boycott from Europeans and many others of Canadian seal products, of fish products and so on. It is kind of a domino in reverse.

There is one example of where an NGO has been trying to focus on the cause of that problem with some of the people who have something to do about it in Europe.

It may be a good example that we could all cite to other environmental organizations to help become part of the solution here. I think we are past the stage on this issue where we should be adversaries. We should be looking at a global resource and the ways in which it is being threatened. We should try to find the most effective way to have good information. That is important, using that information to work co-operatively and with some force. I go back to even using the World Court as part of the solution to that.

Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard): Mr. Speaker, we are here to discuss the fall-out from environmental lunacy.

Supply

Overfishing, the lack of conservation in the north Atlantic, may inflict its initial damage deep within the marine ecosystem, but its eventual consequences are to be found in the devastation of hundreds of Atlantic Canadian communities and thousands of Atlantic Canadian families.

There can be no more vivid example of the absolute interlinking of the economy and the environment than the tragedy before us. While time limitations permit me only to address the environmental consequences of overfishing, it should be understood that the failure to adopt the principles of sustainable development is society's failure, and society must bear the cost.

That means that we have an absolute responsibility to support financially those who have been deprived of their livelihoods and the communities that depend on it.

[Translation]

We are here, Mr. Speaker, to discuss cod overfishing, which is depleting an important natural resource of the Atlantic.

For some time, many of us have continually made the connection between the economy and the environment. There could be no better example than the one before us in this House today.

Overfishing in the Atlantic by France, Spain and Portugal is an act of economic and environmental aggression. It has resulted in the collapse of Atlantic cod stocks, the destruction of that region's economic base and the devastation of hundreds of Canadian communities.

With the problem of overfishing, we are only reaping what we have sown. This tragedy should teach us a lesson: never again can we separate the economy from the environment.

[English]

The broad issue is that the nations of the world are decimating the fish stocks of our oceans. The specific issue, the nations of the European Economic Community are decimating the cod stocks of the north Atlantic. Canada is bearing the brunt of their folly. The government does nothing. The purpose of this motion which I support wholeheartedly is that the time for action is now.