ment Departments, a question relating to the restructuring of Fisheries Products International. I asked him what guarantees would be given to the communities where the Government claimed plants would be disposed of over a three-year period in Newfoundland. He stood in his place and said that I was twisting the facts and raising undue alarm in these communities.

In my supplementary I pointed out that even the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) had made exactly the same statement that same afternoon. We all wanted to know the answer. He then passed it to the Minister responsible for small business who stood up and gave what I call the typical non-answer we get from the Government these days. He said absolutely nothing. That is why I wanted to deal with this question this evening. I note that the Hon. Member for Charlesbourg (Mrs. Tardif) has been designated to answer the question, she being the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. I am sure I will hear a lot more common sense from that Hon. Member than I would from the Deputy Prime Minister, as I am sure you will agree, Mr. Speaker.

The Government has said, and there is no sense in denying it, that 15 fish plants in Newfoundland will be disposed of over a three-year period. That is serious because it involves 15 communities. For the record, let me give the House the names of those communities and the number of jobs involved. We have the Port aux Basques fish plant with 414 employees; we have the Rose Blanche fish plant with 170 employees; and the St. Lawrence fish plant with 102 employees. These plants are to be closed down and disposed of. We have the Charleston plant with 649 employees; the Fermeuse with 218 employees; the Twillingate plant in my riding with 404 employees; the Englee plant with 270 employees; and the Cow Head plant with 39 employees. Then we get down to the plants which are leased to Fisheries Products International. We have the plant at Flower's Cove with 110 employees, the Anchor Pointnplant with 113 employees, the Great Harbour Deep plant with 39 employees, the Bridgeport plant with 49 employees, the Black Tickle plant with 68 employees, the Williams Harbour plant with 39 employees, and the Bide Arm plant with 79 employees. Why did the Minister not release this list when he announced the disposition of these plants? This adds up to 2,775 employees, and that is, at the low point in the fishing season, and not counting part-time staff. We are talking here about a total of 5,000 jobs in Newfoundland.

This is a very important matter which has really not sunk home for the people in Newfoundland, but I am sure it will very soon because there is no other employment in these communities. The Government has already said these are unprofitable plants. Just imagine, putting fish plants on sale and saying they are unprofitable. The Government says the equipment is not up to date and the plants cannot operate economically, yet it expects someone to come along and buy them. This is an absolute violation of an agreement made when Fisheries Products International was created. The Newfoundland Government and this federal Government said no fish plants would close. Now we have this incredible figure of 2,775 employees who are going to lose their jobs over the next three years.

You can see, Mr. Speaker, why I have raised this question here. In fact, if there were not so many important things going on in this Chamber and so many embarrassements for this Government which we have to delve into, I would be up on my feet every single day in this Chamber about this matter. In my riding alone some 550 employees are going to lose their jobs due to this restructuring. I am sure that the Parliamentary Secretary will at least shed some light on this agreement that has been made and will at least give us some hope for the future, certainly more than the Deputy Prime Minister would give.

● (1825)

Mrs. Monique B. Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to answer my colleague, the Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker), and I am not embarrassed at all by his question.

I would like to remind him that the two Government shareholders of Fishery Products International Ltd. have jointly approved the business plan of FPI and have agreed to share an additional equity investment of $105 million. The plan anticipates earning a return on the investment, paying dividends to shareholders, profit-sharing with employees, returning plants to the private sector and creating a modern viable fish harvesting-processing-marketing operation. The new investment will permit FPI's management to achieve its goal of commercial viability and privatization. It completes the restructuring process begun in 1983.

Following the initial investments by the shareholders as part of the restructuring process, the company was plagued with a number of unforeseen events including a delay in appointment of a new senior management team and an eight-month strike by trawlermen. The impact of these problems on operating profits was aggravated by very poor cod product prices until recently and by the disappointing in-shore fishery in 1984 and 1985. With these extraordinary problems now in the past and the new equity investment the company's management team now in place can deal more effectively with economic downturns. They have set forth a program to exploit market opportunities and to respond promptly to changing circumstances.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, in its commercial plan the company has provided for the disposal of fifteen plants within the next two years, to achieve its goals of profitability and privatization. However, FPI intends to operate all these plants during the two-year period, and no decision has been made to close any of the plants the company intends to sell.

The plants that are now sold will be assessed in FPI's 1988 commercial plan in terms of their overall production at that time. The purpose of privatization is to restructure FPI and not to diminish the status of these plants. FPI does not intend