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about 10 per cent of the island workforce. The industry injects \$200 million into the provincial economy. Fisheries exports make up about 30.7 per cent of the province's total export. This year we have had the most dismal fishery that our island has known for a long time.

It is hard to believe that a person at the helm of this sinking ship refuses to admit that the ship is going down. Everyone knows you cannot deal with a problem unless you admit that you have a problem. Yet, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans sees only blue skies and not a cloud anywhere.

Ignoring the problem seems to be a favourite trick of this minister. Last weekend I questioned him on his department's misleading the P.E.I. tuna fishermen. The government changed the rules of the game after it started. It removed the traditional right from the P.E.I. fishermen to fish in the Atlantic off Canso. The minister admitted his officials misled my constituents. In the next breath he was gloating about the prosperous season these tuna fishermen are having.

To add fat to the fire, the minister then claimed there were no rights written on commercial fishing licences. I have seen these rights on licences with my own two eyes. I have a copy of the licence right here, if anyone is interested. Fishermen in eastern P.E.I. are fed up with this minister. They are fed up with being deceived.

The lobster fishery in P.E.I. represents 70 per cent of the total value of island fishery. This season our lobster fishermen have been plagued by low prices due to a glut in the international market. The Canadian dollar is too strong. Our lobster is not competitive when the dollar is strong. The government could have helped prevent this glut. It could have lowered interest rates and brought down the dollar. Instead, this government has not seen fit to do that.

Lobster fishermen have long recognized the risk of limiting our market to the U.S. The government must assume leadership and develop other markets for this essential export.

Lobsters come second after our world famous potatoes in Prince Edward Island in exports. Now there is a storm brewing on the horizon that could indeed lead to the shutdown of my province's second largest industry.

Currently before the Senate and the House of Representatives in the U.S. Congress is a piece of legislation that has proposed to limit the import of Canadian minimum-sized lobsters into that country. This would surely be the straw that broke the camel's back.

Prince Edward Island exports 70 per cent of its cannery to the U.S. Where will we send that 70 per cent of cannery if this legislation is passed? What will happen to the fishermen, their helpers, and the plant fish workers? Why would the Americans attempt to do this in the first place if they did not see Canada as too weak to fight them on the issue?

Is it any wonder that the majority of Atlantic Canadians voted against this government and the free trade agreement in last year's election. The situation is bad enough right now without predicting what is in store for us. Until last week, there were 11 fish plants in my riding. Now there are 10.

The community of Marry Harbour is still reeling from the closure of the fish plant last week. The plant processed lobsters, groundfish, herring, herring roe and other species. It provided jobs for up to 200 seasonal workers. Now who do the fishermen sell their fish to, and where do the 200 seasonal workers go?

It is unbelievable in the light of such a crisis that the government is proposing to change the UI program, to remove the safety net. People in P.E.I. are not being fooled by the government's fancy reallocation of funds. The truth is that in P.E.I. 1,700 fewer people will be eligible to claim UI and the benefit period for 7,000 people will be cut shorter because of the proposed changes to the program.

Is that any way to treat people who are in a crisis, kick them when they are down? Does the government want to train these people to work in some other industry in central Canada?

The fishery is an integral part of Canadian history and heritage. People in Cardigan are proud to live there. They want to continue to live there and work in the fishery. It is time this government woke up and realized that the people who collect the harvest from the ocean at each end of this country deserve better. They deserve to enjoy the same income security and standard of living as those people in central Canada.