

*Oral Questions*

was so good, why did it fall under the government's axe last spring? Why did it stretch the ACOA program from five to seven years, effectively cutting it by 20 per cent?

Will the Prime Minister now give us and the people of Atlantic Canada an assurance that the ACOA fund will not once again be attacked and ravaged by this government? Will he also give us an assurance that the additional funding necessary will be found to address the crisis in the Atlantic economy caused by this government's absolute and utter neglect?

**Mr. Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, unemployment is a pretty good barometer to show how well an economy is doing. Unemployment in Newfoundland since we were sworn in has gone down 7 per cent from where we took it from the Liberals.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mulroney:** Unemployment in Nova Scotia has gone down 4 per cent and unemployment in New Brunswick has gone down 3 per cent.

Regional development programs under the last Liberal government averaged \$185 million a year. That was increased in our first mandate to an average of \$285 million. This mandate it is \$425 million, an increase of 51 per cent. That is the kind of contribution we are making to Atlantic Canada.

It is, I am sure, depressing for Atlantic Canadians to see that they send members who do not even recognize the good areas of economic growth in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador. There are areas of difficulty. We are working to improve them, but the hon. member should stop being a gloomster and a doomster and try a little nation-building for once.

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[*Translation*]

## SHIPBUILDING

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Science and Technology. We have learned that Mr. Tessier, the president of Marine Industries, suggested a three-point

plan to the minister: namely, that the federal government share the accumulated losses with the Government of Quebec, that the contracts on hand be reviewed on a new basis and that the federal government ensure the future of the shipyards beyond 1992.

Mr. Speaker, we already know that the minister has already rejected these three proposals. Does he have other solutions to put forward? Is there another plan to save the disappearing shipbuilding industry in Quebec?

[*English*]

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated in a letter to Mr. Tessier and in conversations with Mr. Tremblay, the minister in the Quebec government with responsibility for MIL, we are certainly willing to enter into discussions with him to find ways in which we can be of assistance to MIL in view of its circumstances and the doubt cast on its long-term future.

We understand that, commiserate with it they are willing to participate in discussions. I will be meeting with Minister Tremblay on Friday to extend those discussions. We will see if we can find a solution.

I do not think it is useful to try to negotiate publicly, through the press or through holding demonstrations of various sorts, but we certainly are going to be co-operating with the Quebec government and MIL.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gagliano:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the minister that thousands and thousands of jobs have been lost in the past five years and we have almost no shipbuilding industry anymore because of this government's *laissez faire* policies. About 2,000 jobs still remain. Will you act immediately to save the shipbuilding industry and these 2,000 jobs or will you continue to talk and, as usual, everything will disappear in Quebec?

[*English*]

**Mr. Andre:** Mr. Speaker, as evidenced by the over 1.5 million new jobs created by this government in the last five years, jobs are very much of interest to us. There is a surplus of capacity in the shipbuilding industry. The