

Adjournment Debate

Violence against women in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not an isolated case. Quite the contrary, this is a global issue. In the reaction against violence directed toward women, Canada has led the Commission on the Status of Women in Vienna in drafting a statement against violence against women—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I cannot allow her to continue, her speaking time having expired. The hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, I rise as a follow-up on a question I had last year on compensation for fishermen. I want to use the opportunity to go through the chronology and to report on where we are and what adjustments we might still be able to invoke.

Roughly a year ago, February 14, there was an announcement that the northern cod quota would be greatly reduced. This of course affected the offshore processing plants. The announcement caused a lot of consternation and resulted in a lot of fishermen, trawler skippers and plant owners being laid off. It was the beginning of a series of questions from the opposition for compensation for those people.

That announcement was a prelude to a more drastic series of actions which took place on July 2, when the northern cod fishery in 2J3KL which affected all of my riding, was made.

Between February 14 and July 2, practically every day concern was shown on this side of the House for these people, to ensure that adequate compensation was put in place for those involved in the fishing industry who were to be drastically affected because they had no source of income when this occurred.

I know that we had two emergency debates on this in the House, and I think you sat in on at least one of them, Mr. Speaker. Again, on my own part and largely because I was the most affected in that interim period, I had no fewer than 30 interventions, either in the form of questions, statements, participation in debate or whatever.

In any case compensation was announced with the closure of the northern cod fishery on July 2. From July 2 to the end of the year two major adjustments were made to the program because the first compensation package was certainly less than adequate.

There has been the involvement of very dedicated officials of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and individually. The people in my riding who worked on this matter and I have a lot of fine things to say for the way they handled the tremendous volume of activity involved. Later in the year a final announcement was made with respect to older workers involved in the fishing industry and owners of vessels who were particularly hard hit.

There are still people who have an attachment to the industry and are hoping for compensation in some way, shape or form. We are still looking at that, together with the department.

Three months after the announcement was made on one of the five telephone lines in my riding and in Ottawa Newfoundland Telephone recorded 10,485 calls in six days which would give some indication of the numbers of people who were trying to clarify their situation. That is still going on. Not to the same extent, but we are receiving between 75 and 100 calls per day and still sorting out where people stand with respect to the compensation.

My concern is that while communications continue to improve there has been some back-tracking in the sense that DFO has now taken one individual per riding and is using recorded messages which I believe do not really help clarify the confusion that still exists. However the situation has improved and it should get better downstream.

In closing, I would ask for continuous smoothing of the process. I give notice right now in this fishery debate that we will be looking at the nose and tail of the Grand Banks. We have not forgotten about that. This is a good time to do it when Newfoundland and Atlantic fishermen cannot fish.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, many times the hon. member opposite has raised the concerns of his community and others in Newfoundland regarding the fishery problems encountered, particularly in the past 12 months.