

Oral Questions

of a resolution will be aided immensely by a degree of reason on both sides.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question deals with the possibility of having this matter regulated in the courts. I wonder whether the minister is telling us that the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment has been persuaded to abandon his responsibilities under the Fisheries Act for the management of Canada's fishing resources.

Mr. Faulkner: Mr. Speaker, that is the sort of silly observation which does not contribute to a solution of the problem.

An hon. Member: Nonsense.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

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TRADE

SUGGESTION CANADA'S UN DELEGATES PARTICIPATE IN GATT NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to those asked earlier of the Deputy Prime Minister. I understand that about a week ago there were reports that European Economic Community countries were almost ready to scuttle the GATT talks at Geneva because of their refusal to grant any reductions in tariffs on agricultural and fisheries' products to coincide with the reductions being offered by North American countries.

This raises the matter of the contractual link which the Prime Minister announced a few years ago. It seems to be more of a contractual kink than a contractual link, because it was all words and no substance.

● (1142)

Does the government not think it is time to make a direct effort in respect of countries of the European Economic Community to see if something can be done to make the talks in Geneva more worth-while, more substantive and not all talk? Also, does he not believe that our people at the United Nations could be of assistance in this regard, because they have access at all times to representatives of these other countries and the GATT negotiations are an offspring of the United Nations. I think this would have more effect on Canadian than South African problems—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the European Community will want to scuttle the multilateral trade negotiations, nor do I believe any of the participants would want to take the responsibility for scuttling, at this stage or at any stage, the important work which is ongoing at the negotiations. There are many reports to that effect, but I doubt whether that is in the mind of any of the participants.

[Mr. Faulkner.]

At the same time, I should say that I would rather see the talks continue in Geneva than have them transferred to the United Nations in New York.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT HAS SPECIAL ECONOMIC PROGRAM FOR NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. Fouse Faour (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. According to the Conference Board in Canada, the province of Newfoundland will experience a second year of economic decline in 1978, down 2 per cent in productivity over last year.

Since unemployment currently is officially at the 17 per cent level, and more reliable estimates place it around 30 per cent in the province, I should like to ask the minister whether he would consider a special economic program for the province of Newfoundland when he brings in his budget next month.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, when we draft a budget we always take into account the different regions of Canada. Of course I am aware of the problems in eastern Canada, Newfoundland and other provinces. We always take that into account. Many of the programs of the government are already very oriented to helping people in slow-growth areas.

Mr. Faour: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Over the last few years we have seen what special consideration has done for the province of Newfoundland. Will the minister seriously consider a special economic program for the province at this time? If so, what sort of proposals might he bring into effect?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, in my last budget there were provisions, special measures, providing accelerated depreciation, greater advantages to the eastern provinces. In addition, government employment programs help those provinces and the equalization payment program gives assistance to the low-income provinces. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion has a special vocation in helping out the weakest provinces in Canada. If the hon. member looks at the record seriously, he will find that in the last few years we have always made special efforts to help the provinces experiencing difficulties.