

Oral Questions

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I take it that the hon. member is suggesting that the expenditures of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is not serving Atlantic Canada. If that is her position, let her tell that to the thousands of business people in Atlantic Canada who see ACOA as an important tool of economic development.

Of course we are living in a very imperfect world. I think ACOA officials acknowledged yesterday that the system had to be improved as per the recommendations of the Auditor General, and they will do so accordingly.

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, yes, it is a very imperfect world. It is pretty imperfect in Atlantic Canada where the region is not getting the advantages under regional development programs that it so richly deserves.

Consequently I ask this minister whether his government will order ACOA officials to meet as soon as possible with officials in the city of Halifax and the county of Halifax where social assistance rates are going through the ceiling to put together some form of economic recovery plan so that the people of Halifax can see some future, some light at the end of the tunnel.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think the experience of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency has always been to consult and work with the people of Atlantic Canada. The people of Halifax have not been treated any differently.

Ms. Clancy: No, we have all been treated badly.

Mr. Valcourt: Of course the political position of the hon. member is important to her. I think that Atlantic Canadians know that the programs of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency are serving Atlantic Canada well.

* * *

INDONESIA

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Three weeks ago, following the massacre of over 100 innocent civilians mourning at a funeral in East Timor, the minister promised to review Canada's policy on aid to Indonesia.

Will the minister now advise the House when this government will not only suspend government to government non-humanitarian aid to Indonesia but will also impose a total embargo on the sale of arms to the repressive Indonesian government?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, our review of aid to Indonesia is just about complete. I have had a preliminary report on it and I will be reporting publicly, probably next week.

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister about an arms embargo as well and I trust she will deal with that in her response to my supplementary question to the same minister.

December 7 marks the 16th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor and in those 16 genocidal years over 200,000 people have died.

Will the minister now drop her insistence that Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor is a *fait accompli*. Instead, will this minister clearly support UN Security Council resolutions 384 and 389 condemning the invasion and unequivocally reaffirming the self-determination of the people of East Timor? Will she act on behalf of the people of East Timor?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have acted on behalf of the people of East Timor first of all because I raised this personally within hours with the Indonesian foreign minister. We are reviewing our aid program. Our ambassador in Jakarta has been very active herself in investigating the situation in East Timor. I am looking at reports from her in my aid review.

We will do everything we can to bring an end to the violence..