

S. O. 31

The Minister was accompanied by Quebec producer Anne-Claire Poirier and Alberta filmmaker Colin Low, from the NFB. On that occasion, the Minister thanked the Academy both in French and in English on behalf of the NFB's 26 million Canadian owners.

Mr Speaker, let me congratulate all our Canadian producers whose talents have made the NFB one of the world's most respected and honoured institutions.

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[English]

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, eight native students on the thirteenth day of a hunger strike are in Ottawa to protest the Government's short-sighted approach to post-secondary education assistance for aboriginal students.

These are just a small number of nearly 15,000 aboriginal students now enrolled in colleges and universities across Canada. They fear that the recent cuts to student assistance will deprive them and potential students of the right to an education.

Over the past 30 years we have seen a tremendous increase in the number of native students entering the post-secondary level. Travelling from isolated communities where unemployment still soars over 70 per cent, these students depend on financial aid for their education.

After listening to yesterday's Throne Speech promising action on aboriginal rights, languages, and economic development, many Canadians find it a sad irony that the Government is actively discouraging this valuable tool of education for a new generation of aboriginal youth.

I call upon the Minister to meet with the students, listen to their concerns, and remove the economic barriers to higher education.

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FISHERIES

ATLANTIC CANADA GROUND FISH INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the House the crisis in the groundfish industry in Atlantic Canada.

During the last month three fish plant closings were announced in my South Shore constituency. We, of course, realize that the Government cannot create fish. Furthermore, I wish to commend and thank the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Siddon) for his active interest in this grave situation and for working co-operatively with both the Government of Nova Scotia and industry representatives in seeking solutions to this problem.

My major concern at this time arises from the fact that the fishing industry operates on credit. With our 300-plus fish plants in Nova Scotia operating at one-quarter of their capacity, survival is tenuous to say the least. Further increases in interest rates will be devastating.

Accordingly, I would urge the Government in establishing its budget and interest policy to keep in mind the potential impact of any further increases in interest rates on Atlantic communities dependent on the troubled groundfish industry.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

EFFECT OF STRIKE

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are all too aware of the strike that is going on at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation involving members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. It has robbed Canadians of some of the best radio and television programming in the world. It has removed some of the most famous faces and voices from our midst, and it has delayed production of full programming at the CBC thereby depriving and jeopardizing the CBC's ability to provide quality Canadian programming.

Because of cut-backs at the CBC, morale there has never been lower because of no clear commitment from the Government to the CBC. Employees at the CBC are concerned about their future. They fear that perhaps the next round of cuts means an end to their jobs.

Employees at the CBC deserve better. They deserve better than this perpetual uncertainty that goes on. What they deserve is a clear commitment from the Government of support of the Canadian broadcasting system, not support just to pick up awards.