

until the Government, the fishermen, and the industry in Newfoundland have given their agreement to it?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I think that I hear the Hon. Member suggesting that one province should have a veto over a matter which is of such national importance as this.

Mr. Rodriguez: You are giving it to them in the Meech Lake Accord.

Mr. Siddon: I can assure the Hon. Member that in the spirit in which we have entered into continuing consultation with all affected parties, including my colleagues, the Atlantic Council of Fisheries Ministers, we are confident that the approach being taken here will prove to be acceptable to the fishermen—

Mr. Rodriguez: You are washed up.

Mr. Siddon: —and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. It will end for all time an unhappy boundary dispute which must be resolved in this way, and in this way alone.

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LITERACY

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ESTABLISH NATIONAL PROGRAM TO REDUCE ILLITERACY

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment. During the past two weeks we have had several reports indicating the critical state of illiteracy in Canada. There are over four million adults who are functionally illiterate. This represents 24 per cent of the Canadian population. Few of those people will continue to find work, or even qualify for training programs.

In these circumstances how can the Government be satisfied with a \$1 million secretariat and a symposium as a solution to this serious problem? Is it not time, for the good of the country and these individuals, that we have a five-year national literacy program with set goals and adequate funding to reduce these shocking figures substantially?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Last week, Mr. Speaker, within the context of the Unemployment Insurance Act, I replied to my colleague the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt. Let us say first of all that the Secretary of State currently carries out a number of studies, but intends, together with the provinces, to develop a number of mechanisms in connection with this issue. Essentially, the people who are collecting unemployment insurance

benefit overpayments are entitled, especially under Section 39, when the costs of these courses are paid—

[Editor's note: A child is crying in the Galleries]

An Hon. Member: As they say, the truth comes out of the mouths of babes.

[English]

Mr. Broadbent: Even the child does not agree.

Mr. Nystrom: There goes another disenchanted voter, Brian.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has no intention of fixing responsibility for that outcry.

[Translation]

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, this is almost the same tune as I am used to hear from the other side.

But here is what I mean to say to my colleague. Under the Unemployment Insurance Act, there are mechanisms available to people taking training courses supervised by employment centres which entitle them to collect benefit payments, I think that my honourable friend will understand that, within the limits of the current legislation and funding, we are unable—we do wish we could, but we are prevented from doing so not because of a lack of will but because of the lack of available financial resources—to assume the overall financial responsibility for people already collecting unemployment insurance. The door would then be wide open to abuse, something, I am sure, my honourable friend would not want to happen.

[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Considering the gravity and size of this problem, the measures announced by the Minister and the Secretary of State are not adequate. There is no sense of urgency.

On behalf of these over four million Canadians, I plead with the Minister to reconsider his answer and to think about a national literacy program to reduce this awful situation in Canada.

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, that is what I have just said in my answer. Before putting together programs... You did it yourself for years but you failed, because of a total lack of consultation. My colleague, the Secretary of State, is in consultation with the provinces, and will set up mechanisms, but as for the employment's strategy, it will work, because we will take into account the provinces' opinions.