

While we acknowledge that hardship will be felt in each of the hundreds of communities affected by the fishery adjustment it is necessary to recognize the potential of communities to develop new economic structures. Therefore ACOA is encouraging communities to group together, to take a regional approach to alternative industry development.

How well we are dealing with the crisis. Our approach as a government, our approach as communities, as a nation, should be not simply to view this as a crisis but it must also be to view this as an opportunity to bring about positive change in this particular area.

When we look at the way government is going to deliver the programs we will make sure that in terms of delivering effective, relevant economic development programs every effort must be made to ensure the harmonization of all existing and anticipated initiatives. That is fundamental to the success of this program. We must remember that government in co-operation with community, unions, business leaders, the people, the various communities, must act in concert, together, toward a common vision as we move forward.

• (1225)

It is critical then that the Atlantic groundfish strategy reinforces the community development thrust of FORD-Q and ACOA. Because we owe that to the people of the area, to the taxpayers of Canada, nothing less than the most efficient, effective and user friendly initiatives that can be designed should be delivered; initiatives that are at once pragmatic, compassionate, developed through consultation, initiatives such as fish plant older worker adjustment program.

This program in a very practical way recognizes the long term contribution of older workers with many years of attachment to the groundfish industry. This change will help these men and women maintain their dignity. It will reduce the impact of communities when it comes to dealing with the damaging consequences of significant job losses.

Bill C-30 as such represents an important component of delivering a truly effective, relevant adjustment package for older workers between the ages of 50 and 64. The programs of the Atlantic groundfish strategy, including the fish plant older worker adjustment program, are each designed to meet the specific needs, to serve as a catalyst for community economic growth and individual adjustment in the face of unprecedented change and disruption.

Bill C-30 is just one response under the strategy to the realities of change but it is an essential response to those Atlantic Canadians who have given so much for so long and who now during this crisis, yet opportunity, during this time when

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they are challenged by unprecedented conditions in the fishery industry really need our support.

It is for this reason that when we were drafting this legislation we took into consideration the various components. We took into consideration the fishery industry. We took into consideration the attachment that these people have to that industry, the economic conditions, the past economic practices and structures of Atlantic Canada.

We feel that through this legislation we are not only addressing a crisis but we are giving people the necessary tools to upgrade their skills, to put their experience into action in community opportunity pools, to provide them with tools like self-employment assistance and portable wage subsidies. We are doing all this because we understand fundamentally that what is occurring in Atlantic Canada today requires an intelligent, pragmatic, rational response.

It requires an innovative, flexible system that can give the opportunity to people in Atlantic Canada to react to a new situation, a new economic system and new challenges that obviously they did not face before.

As I said earlier, the role of the Government of Canada in partnership with all the rest of the stakeholders in the various communities, individual fishermen and plant workers, unions and business is to provide opportunity to the people of Atlantic Canada. I am 150 per cent sure that in the same responsible manner in which the Government of Canada provided those opportunities the people of Atlantic Canada will respond to those challenges, to those opportunities, by making the most out of it.

• (1230)

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased today to speak to the measures introduced by the government in this bill. I think more than anything this bill demonstrates the difference between the Liberal principles and Reform principles.

It clearly demonstrates an old way of thinking about government and a new common sense way of thinking that Reformers are hearing from Canadians across this country. Maritimers and Newfoundlanders are just now beginning to hear from Reformers. I hope they are listening today.

Bill C-30 is one small component of the government's Atlantic groundfish strategy called TAGS in bureaucratic language. TAGS was announced in April by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Human Resources Development as the Liberal government's \$1.9 billion response to the continuing human tragedy unfolding in Atlantic Canada. It resulted from the virtual disappearance of Atlantic cod from our eastern fisheries.