

*Oral Questions*

Minister and myself have said this is an important question, but other matters remain to be discussed. There may be an announcement at some future date.

[English]

**FISHERIES**

**Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my friend, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. He will know that the inshore fishery in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is a complete disaster once again this year. Ten thousand fishermen on the south west coast, in Labrador, and along the great northern peninsula are facing a pretty rough winter as a result.

Would he confirm for us that further quota cuts in the gulf are being contemplated? Also, would he indicate to the House what plans he and the government have to help those fishermen and plant workers who are caught in this situation, absolutely through no fault of their own?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that it is not a fault of their own. Certainly members will not at this time blame the Spaniards or the Portuguese for the overfishing of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

We know and we are aware that some fishermen have raided the resource by discarding and dumping at sea in ways that are totally unacceptable. We have people from the industry, from the provinces and from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans working out a plan to try to address these enormous problems in the gulf.

Yes, we are contemplating reduction of the total allowable catch in that area, but before we make that decision we have to see what measures we can take to try to alleviate the impact that this could have on fishermen on both sides of the gulf.

**Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's):** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in the minister. He will want to reflect on the answer he just gave, because apart from it being inaccurate it is unfair.

He may be talking about some people but, if he listened to my question, he is not talking about the people in my first question. I carefully did not say people in other provinces or in other parts of Canada. I carefully

said people on the south west coast of Newfoundland, in the great northern peninsula, and Labrador. I put to him in this House that none of them in these categories have been guilty of the kind of activities that he has described. He might first want to apologize to the House and to these people in particular.

I ask him, more to the point, to reflect on the question now that he understands it and tell us what he is going to do for those people who, I repeat to him, through no fault of their own find themselves in the situation.

I am not suggesting that it is particularly the minister's fault either, but he is in a position to do something about it. I appeal to him, on behalf of those people, to do exactly that instead of flailing away and blaming people who do not deserve—

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sure the hon. member has put his question. The hon. minister.

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, I fully understand that the answer or the solution does not lie in trying to blame anyone for the problems that fishermen on the south west coast of Newfoundland are experiencing and will be experiencing.

I think the hon. member knows the concern that this government has shown for fishermen affected by a reduction in fishing quotas. We will monitor the situation in the next few weeks and in the next few months. If it becomes required to implement measures to try to be helpful to those communities and those fishermen, we shall proceed the way we have done in the past.

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[Translation]

**CHILDREN**

**Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On October 1st, this government virtuously declared it would designate a minister responsible for children. Today, we see reports telling us that 30 per cent of the 1,2 million children in Quebec schools are undernourished. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for children—that man who asked with such eloquence the rest of the world to fight children's poverty—to explain why his government did nothing to