

Oral Questions

there is no alternative. I trust his message will go forward to the premier.

In the meantime, we intend to do whatever we can to see that every possible plant continues to stay open, including the utilization of the unallocated quotas for underutilized species which the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has arranged. We intend to do everything we can to see that they survive.

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister and the conference sends their love to him. They missed him yesterday.

My supplementary question is directed to the minister. He can try all he wants to slough off the problem onto Premier Wells, whom he has also psyched out on the countervail issue. The minister will be aware that back in 1987 when FPI was privatized the government of which he was a part entered into an agreement whereby the government can oppose the closure of fish plants such as Gaultois, Grand Bank and Trepassey, the three mentioned in the FPI closure announcement. Has the government exercised its option in that agreement to protect those three plants and the 1,500 workers involved? If it has not done so, why has it not done so and will he now undertake to do so to protect those 1,500 jobs until the stocks rebuild?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is referring to an agreement under which either the Government of Canada or the Government of Newfoundland have an option if Fishery Products concludes that it has to close a fish plant. It has to notify both governments and either government has an option to advise Fishery Products Limited that it is not to close some particular plant. The government, whichever government it is that exercises that option, will put up all necessary moneys to see that the plant runs and that any losses are met. That of course would be an action that would result in a countervailable situation in the United States or elsewhere where the country has laws with respect to free trading and with respect to fair trading.

Mr. Simmons: Why did you sign it then?

Mr. Crosbie: That would not be an option. Even in the medium or long term, that would not be an option that

one would want to pursue. There have to be other methods found for plants to continue to operate other than direct subsidization by the government.

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UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

When the minister appeared before the Senate committee examining Bill C-21, she said the following:

The worst misconception of all is that there are no jobs available. The fact is that studies, surveys and our own experiences tell us that there are jobs available, that jobs are available all across Canada, and that given active rather than simply passive support, the unemployed are better able and more likely to take advantage of these opportunities.

Appearing before the same committee the Deputy Minister of Labour from Newfoundland said:

The evidence from Statistics Canada publications indicates the desire to work exists, but the jobs are not there right now—To put it bluntly, then, there is simply not enough work to go around.

My question to the minister is this. The minister tells us that she has studies that show that there are jobs everywhere in Canada. Will the minister stand up now in the House and tell us where the jobs are in Quebec with unemployment at 10.5 per cent and in Newfoundland where unemployment is 16.7 per cent? Can she stand up and tell us where are the jobs specifically in Canso, the Burin Peninsula, and Belle Isle? Specifically, we want to know that. No musing, no fussing.

• (1430)

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the hon. member has been reading the debates, but I am sorry that he did not read them quite closely enough.

I acknowledged that there were more jobs in some parts of Canada than there were in others, but then I went on to say that part of the problem in all parts of Canada is that there is a mismatch between the skills of workers and the jobs available. That is true even in areas where unemployment is higher than we in this government would like it to be. The surveys of the people who we serve through unemployment—