

*Adjournment Debate*

dawning of the new day of consultation and co-operation in federal-provincial relations, then God forbid that this new policy should ever mature beyond the present mess which was exhibited today by the Minister of Fisheries.

We will not let the matter die. Again I ask the Government: What is the formal response to the report of the Forget Commission? Will it attempt to balance the books on the backs of the people who can afford it least? Is that the policy of the Government, or is it something else? When will the Prime Minister and this administration recognize that, beyond the borders of southern Ontario and the growth centres, people in the extremities of the land are suffering unbearably high unemployment. People are asking that their existence be recognized. People are asking that a policy for all Canadian citizens, not only some of them, be developed.

Will we see co-operation, consultation, sensitivity, and caring from the Government which would prevent the kind of brutal and insensitive decision taken by the federal Minister of Fisheries in the absence of any consultation with Atlantic Canadians, a decision which resulted today in otherwise intelligent and rational people calling open-line programs in Newfoundland and talking about having a referendum on getting out of Confederation just as we had a referendum on getting into Confederation. That kind of talk is not the answer and I do not endorse it, but neither do I endorse the kind of arrogant action by a federal Government that would give rise to that kind of arrogant reaction and anger. We expect an answer.

• (1805)

**Mr. Gordon Towers (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) I wish to respond in greater detail to the question of October 14 from the Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin).

The objective of the Commission of Inquiry on Unemployment Insurance was to study thoroughly and impartially the unemployment insurance program and make recommendations to the Government to improve and simplify the program.

In the past few years, the Macdonald Royal Commission, the House Commission in Newfoundland and other studies have reviewed the unemployment insurance program. The recommendations of these several studies are not compatible in many instances. They were studies that were prescribed by the Liberal Party of Canada.

The Government does not endorse the Commission of Inquiry's or any individual report and will not respond directly and specifically to the details in them. All these reports, however, will be used as references in the Government's consideration of unemployment insurance.

Unemployment insurance in its present form is imperfect and adjustments are required. Our objective, as stated in the 1985 Budget, is to improve and simplify the unemployment

insurance system to make it fairer and to ensure that it encourages opportunities in the labour market.

I want to emphasize, as did the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) in his Budget in May, 1985, that our purpose is not to reduce federal contributions to the unemployed. The main objective of unemployment insurance will always be to provide temporary income protection for unemployed workers. The unemployment insurance program should also be able to enhance work incentives and prospects for long-lasting and productive employment. The Government has embarked on such a program.

The Government will listen to the public debate that will follow these studies and will return to the House by May 15 with the Government's proposals.

**Mr. Tobin:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** There are no points of order. The Hon. Member for Parkdale—High Park (Mr. Witer).

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—LIFTING OF SANCTIONS AGAINST SOVIET UNION

**Mr. Andrew Witer (Parkdale—High Park):** Mr. Speaker, the announcement that the Canadian Government decided to restore cultural, educational, scientific and technical contracts with the Soviet Union led me to question the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) as to the reasons for his decision and the timing of the announcement. As my hon. colleagues will recall, the sanctions were imposed in order to censure the Soviets for their invasion of Afghanistan.

The Minister responded to my question by stating that while the sanctions were successful when first imposed, it was time to consider using other instruments in order to change the practices of the Soviet Government. He has stated his belief that sanctions against the U.S.S.R. do not work.

Almost simultaneously, the Minister has imposed sanctions against South Africa and on numerous occasions has stated his belief in their effectiveness. This would appear to be a contradiction and I would welcome the Minister's further elaboration on why sanctions work against South Africa and not against the Soviet Union.

If we accept the premise that sanctions were originally imposed to lend moral weight to our opposition to the Soviet invasion and illegal occupation of Afghanistan, then the question is raised: have circumstances in Afghanistan improved to warrant withdrawal from our earlier position? I submit that circumstances have not improved in Afghanistan since 1980. As a matter of fact, they have worsened significantly.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, and Helsinki Watch have all reported numerous documented human rights violations and that violations by the Soviet and regime forces continue on a massive scale. The Soviets have mounted reprisal attacks and an indiscriminate air and artillery bombardment. The use of anti-personnel