

Oral Questions

cannot afford the tax help from the expensive lawyers and accountants.

The reason we have followed this philosophy of taxation is because it is fairer for Canadians.

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[*Translation*]

FISHERIES

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and concerns the assistance plan for workers in the fisheries industry, which the government intends to set up right away. Will one of the plan's priorities be to keep the jobs in fishing communities so that the workers will be there as soon as the fisheries get back to normal? Will the jobs be there, in order to keep the people in these communities?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I would have thought the hon. member, with her experience and representing a riding where the fisheries are extremely important to her constituents—I would have thought that the present crisis in the Atlantic fisheries would have made her consider whether the solution, whether the programs to be implemented should be aimed at improving the fishermen's income or whether we should put the emphasis on creating jobs in this sector. This is a fundamental issue. Do we want to keep using the fisheries to create jobs or do we want to make the fisheries an economic activity that will be worthwhile for the fishermen? I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that after only a week and half in this department, I was surprised to see that our Atlantic fishermen have incomes that are well below those of most Canadians and that 41 per cent of their income is derived from unemployment insurance. I think these are some fundamental questions that must be addressed.

[*English*]

Mrs. Coline Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, the minister has to learn not to turn the question back here. He is the minister now. He is going to have to work with his colleagues and find solutions.

All I asked was that with the assistance this government is providing will he allow programs to keep the people there. We know the situation will return to

normal. We know that there will be a need for those people to be there? We want to keep the people there. I do not care about unemployment insurance. Most of the people in southern Nova Scotia did not always need unemployment insurance when the fishery was healthy.

Will the minister use the money that is coming in a project to employ fishermen to help his department—which will not listen to fishermen—with the scientific research in the Scotia-Fundy? We need an assessment of stocks before we start saying what we are going to do. We do not know what the stocks are like there and his former department would not listen to the fishermen.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am still looking for the question.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

If the hon. member would give me a chance, I will answer her question.

[*English*]

The member said that now I have to make the decisions. Well watch me. I think you have heard that before. We will be making the decision.

However, if you ask me today to again tell Atlantic Canadians that we will guarantee that every person who has a job in the plant today will have that job tomorrow, I cannot make that promise. It would be fooling them.

Everyone talks about overcapacity in harvesting. We talk about overcapacity in the processing plant. And the member is grandstanding on the issue and telling me to ignore this. Well, I will not.

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COMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the government assured me yesterday that a broad based telecommunications bill will be introduced in due course, but added a little caveat that the Minister of Communications still has some consultations to be concluded with the provinces. Given that the business community and consumers are very worried and anxious, and given the Prime Minister's stated support for ending fragmentation of telecommunications interprovincial regulation—given all this—will the Deputy Prime Minister show federal leadership today and direct the Minister of Communications to table the bill next week? Will he give