

Oral Questions

fishermen. He should be applauding that kind of attitude of the Government of Canada.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister ought to be sharing my anguish for the hundreds and thousands of Atlantic families who are facing poverty and joblessness and for the towns that have been wiped out. That is what he should be reacting to.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman is so intent on being a bigshot on the world stage that he sold out Atlantic Canada.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, this is a national disaster. Fishermen and workers in processing plants on the Atlantic coast are out of work. They don't want frivolous answers from the Canadian government that shift the blame to our friends, they want a constructive response, an answer to the question how the economy of the Atlantic provinces can be revived. That is what they expect from the Prime Minister of Canada. Mr. Speaker, I have one more question. Aside from his partisan and frivolous remarks, what kind of concrete action will he take to try and revive the depressed economy of the Atlantic provinces? Let him do something so that people in the Atlantic region will not have the worst Christmas ever!

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

[*English*]

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend talks about a crisis in Atlantic Canada. I have already indicated the seriousness of the matter and the intention of the government to deal with it.

Mr. Tobin: It's too bad you don't have a conscience, you might do something about it.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. members on both sides to put their questions or comments through the Chair, if they feel a very great necessity to get into the debate. In the meantime we probably could move on more effectively if all hon. members would listen to the question and listen to the response.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, to put it in perspective before the right hon. gentleman gets carried away with his own rhetoric, I ask the House to consider the numbers.

• (1430)

In September 1984 unemployment in Newfoundland and Labrador was 23.5 per cent.

Ms. Phinney: What is it today?

Mr. Mulroney: Today it is down to 17.1 per cent, a drop of 6.4 per cent under this government.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Clancy: Tell that to Canso.

Mr. Mulroney: The member for Halifax asks about Nova Scotia. It was 13.8 per cent under the Liberals. We have reduced it to 9.9 per cent, and it continues to drop.

In New Brunswick it was 16.3 per cent. It is now down to 12.8 per cent, and it continues to drop in New Brunswick.

In all of the provinces there has been substantial improvement. There is a new and important problem and that problem deals with the seriousness of the Atlantic fishery.

The Minister for International Trade, the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Employment and Immigration and all members of the government are involved in putting together a strategy that will assist not only the fishermen and the fishing communities but all who depend upon the fishery for a livelihood. Apart from the original, interesting and I think effective programs that have already been announced by the various ministers, I have already indicated to my right hon. friend that the Government of Canada will act in respect of the Atlantic fishery with exactly the same kind of generosity and enthusiasm that we brought to resolving the problems of the prairie farmer a few years ago.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!