

Oral Questions

understand his frustration. I hope he can understand my frustration.

If it were simply a question of political will, there is no one in this House that has any more political will than I have. It would not be a problem any longer if it were a question of political will. It is a very delicate and intricate question of international relations where this country has no rights beyond the 200-mile limit.

It is not that there has been no action. I have outlined for the House all kinds of actions that we have taken. If the European Community and the nations that make it up do not pay attention to the steps we are going to have to take in the next month or two and to the advice that we have received from our scientists then we will know there has to be a change in direction in what we are trying to do to persuade them to observe and exhibit some conscience about the waste they are making of the assets that belong to the whole world outside the 200-mile economic limit.

Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

I would suggest that the minister has a very short memory. On January 9 in St. John's on NTV, the minister was reported to have promised unilateral action if the European Community did not stop overfishing. Time has run out. They haven't. He hasn't. They won't. So when will he show the political will to take the unilateral action that he promised on January 9?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, if we looked at the transcript I think we would see that nothing was promised in the extreme terms the hon. gentleman mentioned.

The government has taken many unilateral actions to deal with this situation. As I pointed out in a speech in London earlier in January, if nothing further is accomplished this year, if the European Community and the nations that have vessels registered in Panama and otherwise do not heed the cries of humanity that they should practice sensible conservation methods in the northwest Atlantic then anything is possible.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Two years ago in Black Tickle two million pounds of fish were landed. Last year not a single pound of fish was landed in Black Tickle. Whole communities on the Labrador coast face being wiped out completely. Whether the minister likes it or not, he is accountable.

What answers does he have today for fishermen who face losing their livelihoods and their homes? What answers does he have for them today?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, in my view, with the approaches that we have taken and we are taking, the fishery will come back and the northern cod fishery will flourish again. There is going to be a period when it is not flourishing.

With respect to Black Tickle, to take that particular instance, what did the government do? It brought in a nice compensation program that compensated every fishermen in Black Tickle who was prevented by ice from fishing. That compensation amounted altogether to \$37 million.

Then the government brought in the Atlantic Catch Failure Program to help the fishermen of Black Tickle and other fishermen so that they became qualified for unemployment insurance. If the same terrible circumstance affects them again this year, similar kinds of assistance will come to them until they can properly fish again and catch as they were doing several years ago and as they are going to do again in the future.

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, the people of Black Tickle on the Labrador coast do not want handouts.

They want jobs and they want to be able to fish. They do not want simply to be looked after by this government. They live closest to the resource. Many of them are native fishermen, and yet their catches go down and the catches of foreigners go up.

How does the minister explain that, and when is he going to stand up for Labrador fishermen?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the fishermen