

# East Coast fishery needs 'Marshall Plan'

□ Ottawa and the provinces must pay, report says

By Elaine Flaherty

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HALIFAX — It will take a well-organized plan — similar to the Marshall Plan that rebuilt Europe after the Second World War — to see Atlantic Canada through the catastrophic collapse of the fishery, says a report released Monday.

"We are dealing here with a great destruction," Richard Cashin, head of a task force on income adjustment in the fishing industry, said Monday as the group released its long-awaited report.

"This is a challenge that will test the strength of the Atlantic fishing community. More than that, it will take the political will and the help of the nation as a whole to rescue and reconstruct the Atlantic fishery and Atlantic Canada's coastal economy."

Cashin was asked to look at the human cost of the crisis — to

suggest ways for those displaced to survive until fish stocks return and to determine the future of the fishing industry.

His recommendations are sweeping and not without pain. And while neither he nor federal Fisheries Minister Brian Tobin could cite a figure, Cashin said, "the cost of what we recommend is less than the cost of doing nothing."

Ottawa and the provinces must provide income support for the 40,000 jobless, Cashin concluded.

But while it recognizes immediate help is necessary, the report emphasizes the industry and government support programs must be overhauled. A rebuilt fishery will by necessity be much smaller, said Cashin.

"Some, perhaps half of those who until recently depended on the industry, should be able to make a decent living in a renewed and sustainable Atlantic fishery."

To help stabilize the incomes of those who remain, the report recommends unemployment in-

surance for fishermen be reformed and tightened, concentrating benefits on those people who are professional, full-time participants in the industry.

The report suggests fishermen be allowed to accrue UI credits during good years to be used if a stock fails. Similarly, the report proposes a savings-account program — similar to a registered retirement savings plan — that would allow fishermen to bank earnings to be used in lean years.

Cashin and his committee urge governments to act quickly.



CASHIN: Nation must help