

Prairies there are tough times along the entire St. Lawrence Seaway. If we stick together we can pull through it.

On this specific issue I can tell the Member that the Ministers are meeting at a high level. They are trying to come up with a proposal as a result of representations made by a grain coalition. I am sure the resolution will be satisfactory to the Member and all Members in the House.

● (1440)

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary could confirm that the Government has a secret report that indicates that over 1,150 workers will be laid off by this time next year. I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary could say exactly what action the Government is going to take to equalize opportunity for the Thunder Bay port and whether the Government is going to take other action to ensure that a reasonable share of these jobs is maintained.

For instance, the Prime Minister announced a couple of months ago in the Lac-Saint-Jean by-election that he was going to provide \$164 million. Is there going to be specific action taken to help the port of Thunder Bay to ensure it continues to operate and employment is maintained?

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, there are dozens of situations which have arisen over the last four years where a certain sector of our population found itself in deep trouble and the federal Government has been there. It will be there in this situation in the appropriate way.

LAI-D-OFF WORKERS—GOVERNMENT MEASURES

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and concerns the devastating impact on the Port of Thunder Bay and on seafarers and grain handlers throughout the eastern system. The Minister is one of the Members of the Cabinet who have been meeting to discuss remedial action to be taken in the short and long-term. I wonder if she is prepared to advise those people who are already laid off, and those who are about to be laid off, what specific action the Government of Canada is going to take to protect their interests.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, like my hon. colleague, we recognize and sympathize with the local difficulties. The Industrial Adjustment Advisory Service has been working with groups in Thunder Bay. It will continue to work with these groups and we will try to come up with appropriate solutions, but it will take some time to work these things out.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Iain Angus (Thunder Bay—Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, as every day passes, more and more men and women are being

laid off. Their families are wondering what is going to happen to them. I am wondering if someone in the Government can at least tell us when the Government is going to announce what kind of plan of action it has been able to come up with. The Government has been working on it now for nearly six weeks. It has known the problem was going to happen for three years. When will there be some action taken for these people?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think the people most familiar with this, and who are working the hardest on it, aside from my own Department, are the Minister of Labour and the Minister for Grains and Oilseeds. They have been actively engaged in seeking solutions to this problem and seeking the help of their colleagues. We will come up with a solution as soon as we can. We have the co-operation of a number of parties as we try to work out what can be done.

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—REQUEST FOR GENERAL ELECTION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Over the weekend the Prime Minister was quoted in an interview with *Le Devoir* as saying that the ratification of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement could be delayed beyond the January 1 deadline. In fact, he would be unconcerned whether the implementing legislation was to be considered beyond that.

Considering that the Prime Minister is unconcerned, that he is prepared to delay the ratification of the Bill, and considering that a large majority of Canadians want an election before that ratification takes place, I wonder if, on behalf of the Government, the Deputy Prime Minister can give us the assurance today that the Government will call an election before the ratification of the trade agreement so that Canadians will have what is their right, that is, to decide whether they agree with this terrible agreement or not.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding with our free trade legislation. It has not passed third reading in the House of Commons as yet. When it does so, it will go to the Senate. Then, of course, Senators will be put to the test. Are they the house of sober second thought, or are the Liberal majority merely automata, to respond to any hint or direction given to them by the Liberal Party?

In other words, is this country governed by the Liberal Party when it is elected? And is it also governed by the Liberal Party when the Liberal Party is not elected but their majority in the Senate governs for them? That is the question we are going to