

House what he intends to do today, right now, to correct this serious problem that is affecting our maple trees?

[English]

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am puzzled by the question because my understanding is that yesterday the major spokespersons for the maple sugar industry, especially in Quebec, welcomed the initiative taken by President Reagan in Washington and made public statements to that effect. We recognize, as I think it is being increasingly recognized in other jurisdictions, that forestry is suffering among the worst effects from acid rain. In Quebec we are seeing maple sugar production plummet by as much as 50 per cent because of acid rain related emissions.

One of the reasons we are seeking an accord with the United States to slash acid rain causing emissions on both sides of the border is to help the very people whose cause the Hon. Member intended to champion in his question.

[Translation]

REPAYMENT OF \$100 MILLION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Tardif (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is also directed to the Prime Minister. They find most timid indeed the progress made with respect to this issue, if any. They currently estimate at \$100 million the losses suffered by that industry. Does the Government intend at the next summit to present the American administration with the bill: \$100 million, and does the Government intend to support that \$100 million claim for losses to date?

[English]

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member were truly fair on this question, and if the Liberal Party of which he is a Member were truly fair, he would recognize that over many years Canada has faced an enormous amount of opposition south of the border to progress on acid rain. We are making progress. That contrasts with the situation that prevailed in June of 1982 when the previous Government terminated all discussions with the Americans on acid rain out of sheer frustration at the lack of progress.

To the credit of the Prime Minister, he put the issue back on the agenda. He got acid rain back on the rails. We are making steady progress. There are no home runs, no grand slams, no royal flushes in Washington on acid rain. But we are making singles and doubles that will eventually put home runs on the board.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

RAIL FREIGHT CAR INDUSTRY

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The rail freight car industry in Canada has faced massive problems in recent years. Last year, National Steel Car in Hamilton saw its workforce fluctuate between 100 and 1,000 people. The latest incident is with today's announcement that Hawker Siddeley has put the Trenton car plant on the market because of lack of orders. What will the Government do to ensure that our rail car industry remains healthy?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I think we have already recognized the regional challenges and it is also our intention to meet them. Since September, 1984, the Government has been doing things in that province, in the Atlantic area—first, we signed energy agreements; second, we had new economic development agreements with the provinces, and also we intend to keep working at that.

But with respect to Hawker Siddeley, we are especially concerned with that company's plans to sell their interests. We intend to work in close co-operation with the company and the Province, Mr. Speaker, in order to find solutions which would allow the company to remain in operation.

[English]

HAWKER SIDDELEY PLANT AT TRENTON, N.S.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question was asked of the former Member for Central Nova who said in the 1983 by-election campaign that Ottawa "should use its colossal procurement influence in the Department of Supply and Services and Canadian National Railway to guarantee that the Hawker Siddeley (Canada) Ltd. rail car plant at Trenton, Nova Scotia, gets its fair share of orders, and that other industries in that area benefit". What will the Prime Minister do to help the people of that area?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the Government of Canada will do. It will work very closely with the province, with prospective purchasers, with Hawker Siddeley, with the Crown agencies, for example the CNR, and with all possible *intervenants* in this case to make absolutely certain that the Hawker Siddeley operation in Trenton continues to provide gainful and beneficial employment in an ongoing way for the people of Central Nova.