

*Adjournment Debate*

Canada Packers for many years. This lay-off will take place in April of this year.

There is a distinct possibility that another 550 workers employed by Canada Packers will lose their jobs, as the company is considering very seriously the closing of its whole packing plant in the City of Winnipeg.

How did this happen? In 1986, the federal Government made an initial grant of \$865,000 to facilitate the establishment of a hog killing and processing plant in Neepawa. That plant opened in September. When the Government made the announcement that it would make this grant available so that a plant which could kill and process hogs could be established in Neepawa, the union representing workers in Winnipeg warned the Government of the dire consequences of that action. They pointed out that there was very little increase in the number of hogs that are processed in the Province of Manitoba and predicted that if the plant opened in Neepawa it would have very serious adverse effects on the Canada Packers plant in Winnipeg.

In December, 1986, unfortunately the warnings of the union were proven correct. Canada Packers announced the closure of its beef kill and processing operation at its Winnipeg plant. As I already mentioned, 450 workers will lose their jobs in April.

The existing plant in Winnipeg is about 50 years old. The company also announced the real possibility of closing its entire Winnipeg plant in 1988, unless it decides to build a new modern processing plant. The company made it clear that it would not proceed with the building of a new plant without financial assistance from the federal and provincial Governments.

Most of the workers who will be laid off in April, and the rest of the 1000 workers who would lose their jobs if the whole plant closes, have worked for that company for many years. It will be very difficult for many of them to find other work.

I call on the federal Government to act in co-operation with the company and the provincial Government to assist in financing the building of a new Canada Packers plant in Winnipeg.

Discussions are also taking place about expanding the Burns plant in Winnipeg, which would give work to 200 more workers. If the Government is considering financial assistance to that plant, I urge it to require the Burns company plant to give first opportunity for employment in the expanded plant to workers who have been or may be laid off by Canada Packers, as one of the conditions for receiving the grant.

● (1805)

**Mr. Bud Bradley (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) I would like to elaborate on the action being taken to help the workers who are to be laid off from the Canada Packers plant in Winnipeg.

First, the Minister wants to underline that he shares the concerns of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) with respect to the future of these workers. Like him, the Minister believes that every effort must be made to help these workers through the difficult adjustment they face. The Minister also agrees that the best results will be achieved if the company, the employees, the federal Government and the provincial Government work together to put in place the assistance the workers need.

To this end, intensive discussions took place throughout January between Employment and Immigration Commission officials, company and union representatives, as well as with senior officials of both the provincial Department of Labour and the Department of Employment Services and Economic Security.

On behalf of the Minister I am pleased to be able to report that agreement has just been reached with all parties to begin work immediately on a joint adjustment action plan. The federal Government will participate through the Commission's Industrial Adjustment Service, and the Province of Manitoba will do so through its Employment Adjustment and Technological Change Program, a Manitoba jobs fund initiative.

Activity will be carried out by two committees. One, composed of company and union representatives, will address the needs of the 400 hourly-rated workers; the other, composed of company and non-union employees, will address the needs of the 75 salaried workers.

Committee costs will be shared equally by the company, the province and the federal Government. Both committees will be chaired by the same independent chairperson to be chosen by the committee members themselves. The Commission and the Province of Manitoba have each identified representatives to assist and advise the committees. The types of assistance which the committees can consider recommending are many and varied. They can range from retraining, sessions on résumé writing or job search techniques, to job counselling, vocational testing or financial counselling.

This is an urgent situation and one in which none of the parties intend to let the grass grow under their feet. It is also an excellent example of federal, provincial and private sector co-operation.

Although the circumstances are difficult, the Minister is confident that through the joint efforts of Canada Packers, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union and both levels of Government every possible resource will be tapped and organized to help the workers prepare for, and find, new jobs.

FISHERIES—MARKETING OF FRESHWATER FISH—SENATE  
COMMITTEE REPORT

**Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic):** Mr. Speaker, the question I asked of the Minister of Fisheries and Ocean (Mr. Siddon) was on October 30. Thus some time has passed since the questioning took place. However, it does not really matter