

● (1117)

MANPOWER**LAY-OFFS AT INCO—GOVERNMENT ACTION**

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my final question must be directed to one or other of these ministers who have been involved for so long in this matter. How about the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources? What is the government doing about this tragedy in the mining industry and the metal industry in this country? What specifics does the minister have or what does his government have? What are you proposing to lay before the meeting next Tuesday? The Ontario officials met with INCO management last night, met with the Sudbury labour people this morning, and right now, today, there is an emergency debate in the Ontario legislature about this matter. Why the foot dragging at the cabinet level? What is the minister proposing specifically?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, when I hear the hon. member ask a question of that nature, it seems to me he is more interested in coverage than candour.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cullen: The hon. member indicated, first of all, that we are dragging our feet.

An hon. Member: Right on!

Mr. Paproski: That is exactly what you are doing.

Mr. Cullen: In point of fact, the minister of labour for the province of Ontario called my office and asked if they could participate in the meeting we had arranged with both management and labour.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: That is an admission right there.

Mr. Cullen: Second, I met with two members from International Nickel who spelled out for us, the night before the announcement, the action they proposed to take. At that time I discussed with them some possible alternatives about how we might ameliorate that very, very serious situation. I indicated to them that in addition—

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): What about Gillespie?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. members opposite want to listen, I will tell them. The INCO people are prepared to listen, the union is prepared to listen, so surely the opposition should be prepared to listen.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

Mr. Trudeau: All the members opposite want is coverage.

Mr. Paproski: Pierre, you are an old sly fox.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I spelled out to management that in the new Bill C-27 there was a provision dealing with work sharing. It struck me that this was a textbook case for the application of that provision.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cullen: The INCO officials expressed very serious interest in this, because they were looking at other alternatives themselves. One example is a four day work week, as well as other mechanisms and machinery. I will discuss that with management and with labour.

In addition to that, we have notified all our Canada Manpower officers that they are to focus in on the Sudbury and Thompson areas, and any vacancies or job opportunities which occur in the mining field. Also in addition to that, we are carefully cataloguing those opportunities that are available to see if these individuals at INCO, most of whom have approximately two or three years seniority in that particular operation, are more mobile and would be in a position to move. It is unfortunate that they may have to move. Some of them will move, some of them will not move. We will do everything we can to accommodate them. Also, in addition to that, under our Canada Works program, we are going to look to spending more moneys—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cullen: Well, the hon. members say: "oh, oh", but the hon. members from Sudbury seem to indicate that it is not a bad alternative. In addition to that, we will be looking at using the emergency feature of the Canada Works program in the interests of assisting.

The hon. member has referred to foot dragging. The company has to give the union 16 weeks notice of this particular lay-off. On that basis, we have time to work. We do not believe in operating the way the hon. member is suggesting. We have to look very carefully at a most serious problem.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1122)

LAY-OFFS AT INCO—MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE SITUATION AT THOMPSON, MANITOBA

Mr. Cecil Smith (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It appears we are dealing with a government that cannot see much further than the end of its nose. Just a few short years ago, during his flower years, of course, the Prime Minister said that those who are unemployed should go to Thompson for jobs. Yesterday massive layoffs were announced by INCO metals. The Minister of Employment and Immigration neglected to mention the Thompson area when he referred to creating some stop-gap employment. Thompson is seriously affected with 650 layoffs. Will the minister advise what contingency plans he has