

*Oral questions*

plant in Aylmer, in my riding, which will close its doors in September 1989. One may wonder whether the Government was not already aware of it.

I would like the Prime Minister to tell me what his Government intends to do to prevent the Aylmer plant from closing down, since it is the principal industry, and what measures he intends to take to protect the workers.

[English]

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** I know Hon. Members would want to be sure that, with a larger Opposition, all of their colleagues can get a chance to ask questions. The Hon. Minister.

[Translation]

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I would first of all like to tell you that we have been in touch with Northern Telecom and that in our opinion, there is absolutely no connection between the proposals concerning the Free Trade Treaty that are before this House and the rationalization which the company must do because of increasingly competitive world markets in order to provide Canadians jobs, to ensure that the company remains viable and one of the world leaders in its field.

We are satisfied that the company is setting up adjustment programs for its employees so that they can relocate and retrain, as much as possible.

QUERY WHETHER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS

**Mr. Gilles Rocheleau (Hull—Aylmer):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is still for the Prime Minister. One of the essential conditions of the Government of Quebec was that the federal Government recognize the need for adjustment programs for worker retraining.

That being so, does the federal Government intend to fund the adjustment programs?

[English]

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think is important to note is that Northern Telecom is providing some considerable retraining assistance of its own. My Department stands by, as it always does, to assist workers in any affected area, whatever the reasons for layoffs.

Northern Telecom has been very sensitive to the needs of its employees. It has provided a \$2.5 million fund to retrain its workers, to provide the kind of training that will ensure that within other industries in the area its employees will be fully competitive in their ability to get new jobs.

In addition, the industrial adjustment services are ready to stand by in case there are further needs, and my colleague, the Minister of Labour, and members of my staff have met with them. Let me say that they have been very successful in the past in retraining and upgrading employees that have had a problem, and I think we will wait and see if this program works.

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## INDUSTRY

### NORTHER TELECOM—ANNOUNCED CLOSURE OF AYLMEER PLANT

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I say to the Hon. Minister that the workers affected do not want to stand around and wait to see if it works. They want something that works right now.

On the same subject, the Minister will probably know that the union representing the workers affected at Northern Telecom has very strong reasons to believe, reasons which it has mentioned publicly, that the production jobs affected in Aylmer will be transferred to Atlanta, Georgia, where they are already producing a similar product for export into the Canadian market.

I want to ask the Minister, considering that Northern Telecom has a quasi-monopoly market guaranteed for its products in Canada and that it has already received from the federal Government, that is from Canadian taxpayers, millions of dollars in grants and assistance, does the Canadian Government simply intend to stand back and let these jobs be transferred to the U.S., or will the Government intervene directly to keep those jobs in Canada where they belong?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, Northern Telecom, as my colleague has said, is a globally competitive company and I think its employees are very proud of its record of job creation in Canada as well as around the world, and it intends to remain competitive.

Let me say as well in terms of the restructuring the company is doing that there will be more job reductions