

Why this double standard? Will the Prime Minister explain this sell-out of workers in northern Ontario?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, there is no double standard. There is certainly no desire to do anything but help workers in northern Ontario and elsewhere in the country.

What is at issue here is the necessity to have in place some agreement between Canada and the United States that will take the place of a tax whose history is well known to Members of this House. Those discussions involving Canada and the United States are going forward, and there are consultations with the Canadian industries affected.

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TOURISM

ECONOMIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for tourism. The Minister has decided not to renew or, rather, abandon the Economic Regional Development Agreements for tourism in particular, and especially for the eastern provinces.

Every provincial Ministry of Tourism in the country has clearly indicated that the Government has no real understanding of the tourism industry, no plans, and now diminishing means to assist in a marketing strategy for the provinces.

Can the Minister explain how his Ministry is so totally at odds with every other tourist Ministry in the country?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, unlike the premise in the Hon. Member's question, the Government in fact is coming to terms with modern realities.

We had in the past ERDA arrangements which funded up \$246 million with the provinces. They have produced a great deal of product and they have on the whole contributed largely to the regional development of those economies.

However, there were problems with the agreements. They were cumbersome. Decision making was some-

times difficult. Also there was not enough emphasis on marketing instead of product development.

We are going to put a new regime in place with the regional agencies. I will, in consultation with my colleagues, bring this whole program up to modern standards rather than keep it in the old world.

• (1450)

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT MINISTER CALL IN PROVINCIAL COUNTERPARTS

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, considering what I have heard from most tourism departments in Canada, could the Minister, before he introduces a new system, perhaps inform the House whether he intends to at least call a meeting of provincial Tourism Ministers to keep the situation from deteriorating any further?

[English]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I met three weeks ago with the Ministers of Tourism of the various provinces and made it clear that the ERDA policy context was not the appropriate one for the future but that a new policy context could be put in place. They are looking forward to discussing this with me.

The new context will come to terms with our needs to advertise the product we already have and to put together a program that crosses provincial boundaries and does not just encapsulate this program within the provincial-federal context but makes it a wider program and a more dynamic program.

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[Translation]

CULTURE

OPPOSITION TO TAX ON BOOKS

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications. The sales tax will apply to books and magazines. Every country in the world and every province in Canada maintains a policy of not taxing books.

Why is the Minister of Culture going to impose a tax on reading?