

Oral Questions

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, obviously that privileged, confidential letter was not considered that way by whoever sent it, having given a copy to the hon. member.

The hon. member is talking about the operations of the company in terms of whether it is more economic to make the batteries here and ship them there or vice versa. I know he has a great belief in decisions about the operations of companies being made by politicians as being superior to those that are made by the marketplace.

The fact is that this company was going bankrupt. The managers were not able to operate it in a financially viable way. It is possible; there have never been any examples on earth, but we have to admit the theoretical possibility that had the company been run by somebody like the hon. member perhaps it would have made a profit. In the circumstances there was no other alternative.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence and it is with regard to the fire in Hagersville as well.

It is my understanding that at Camp Borden, which is about one and a half hours away from the fire, a fire-fighting school already exists. In view of the short distance involved, why have those resources not been used in fighting this fire?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's information is correct. There is a Canadian Forces fire-fighting school located at Camp Borden.

I also would like to inform the hon. member that earlier this day an offer was made by the Department of National Defence to provide fire-fighters from that school and other military personnel to the Emergency Measures Organization of Ontario and to the municipality.

Before two o'clock this afternoon that offer was rejected. We were informed that the Government of Ontario and the Emergency Measures Organization felt that they had the equipment that was necessary, that

they had the capability and that they had the problem under control.

I would also inform the hon. member that there is at present a liaison officer of the Canadian Forces in Hagersville to monitor. I can also inform him that the fire-fighting school and CF personnel are on 24-hour standby and would respond to a request.

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[*Translation*]**BILINGUAL LABELLING**

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Canadian manufacturers must spend substantial sums of money to conform to the standards for bilingual labelling. Meanwhile, Americans export tons of items to Canada with labels in English only. This puts our manufacturing sector at a disadvantage and is a threat to bilingualism, which goes against the government's commitment to Canadians during the last election campaign.

What does the minister intend doing to remedy this unacceptable situation?

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as we announced last October, we have in co-operation with Customs and Excise and the Department of National Revenue stepped up inspections at the border of goods coming in to ensure they are properly labelled.

We have, in addition, got together with the association representing 90 per cent of the food retailers in this country to get their voluntary co-operation to ensure that goods on their shelves are properly labelled.

We are taking the necessary action to that ensure Canadian law is fully complied with.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, they cannot possibly be taking the necessary action because there are only 160 inspectors across Canada to police the language regulations of the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and the Food and Drug Act, which is woefully insufficient. The minister knows that complaints against illegal labelling of Ameri-