

particular is he aware of the anxieties of the workers in the manufacturing of component parts for the appliance, electronics and communications industries, and what steps is the government taking to protect their jobs should there be a cut in tariffs in these items?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the problem is extremely complex. Of course, in some areas, a tariff reduction would foster exports of Canadian manufactured goods. In other areas, a tariff reduction could create problems for existing industries. We are looking into all aspects of the problem and hoping that the negotiations will benefit the whole country.

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INDUSTRY

CLOSING OF DOMTAR PLANT AT EAST ANGUS—MEASURES TO AVOID LAY-OFFS

Mr. Claude Tessier (Compton): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce?

Since the Domtar Company expects to shut down its East Angus plant, which involves the lay-off of some 570 workers and economically affects over 300 other workers, close to 900 workers all told, can the minister tell the House what measures the government can and intends to take to counteract the current economic factors and to brighten long term perspectives for pulp and paper plants, measures which could be so efficient as to prevent the disappearance of jobs for more than 900 workers, who represent more than half the labour force in the third most important town in my riding and nearly 5 per cent of the labour force of my riding as a whole?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, this is of course an extremely difficult problem. As we know, the pulp and paper industry is presently going through a rather complicated period because competition is becoming ever more difficult and because of the fact that, among other things, some of our plants have become obsolete and the hourly rate is higher than in the south of the United States, which makes the situation extremely complex.

I have not had the opportunity to review the situation of the Domtar plant in East Angus. I shall inquire to see whether there are any workable solutions and, if so, I shall be tremendously pleased to make all my departmental services available.

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[English]

TRANSPORT

LOCK AT SAULT STE. MARIE—REDUCTION IN HOURS OF SERVICE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transport. It deals

with the present unemployment situation, particularly in northern Ontario where the unemployment rate is running in excess of 12 per cent. Will the minister reconsider his decision to reduce services in the Canadian lock at Sault Ste. Marie, a move which can only discourage the use of that lock and ultimately lead to its closure and the loss of an additional 50 jobs in the area? If that is not the minister's intention, will he undertake to see that the Sault lock is fully utilized, rather than proceed with a decision which can only aggravate the unemployment situation?

● (1450)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. lady seems to have missed the facts of the case. The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority had indicated its intention to reduce the number of hours the lock was open, but after further consideration I asked the Seaway Authority to avoid this restriction at this time while the whole question of the future of a lock at that position is considered. I think it is generally agreed on all sides that for the lock to be useful over the long term a larger capacity is required than is the present case, and that very serious capital question has to be examined carefully. While this study is going on the Seaway Authority has avoided any restriction in the volume of work being provided which it had originally planned.

Miss MacDonald: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Given the statement made by the minister in the House on March 29, when the proposal was made that services might be reduced in this area, is the minister now stating unequivocally that there will be no reduction of services in the lock at Sault Ste. Marie for this summer period and, indeed, into the ongoing future?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I will send the hon. member the announcement which indicates that a restriction has been placed on any change in work until the study regarding the future of the lock is completed.

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CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

REQUEST FOR DELAY IN MOVING HEADQUARTERS TO HULL

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister in his capacity as Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs. When he appeared recently before the external affairs committee, the new president of CIDA stated very clearly his "grave concern" about the planned move of CIDA to new offices in Hull. His objections are based on the disruption that such a move will entail at precisely the time when major administrative reforms are being undertaken. Given these objections and the vital importance of sustaining the momentum for administrative reform at CIDA, would the minister undertake to have the matter of the move to Hull reviewed by the government with a view to postponing or stopping the move?