

Oral Questions

environment on industry, on the economic recovery of the mining sector, and on the discovery or development of new technology. Does the Government have any plans to accept some public commitment to clean up the environment instead of putting all the blame on the shoulder of industry, particularly at a time when the mining sector faces such an uncertain future and when the development of new technology is quite far off in the future?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of State (Mines)): Mr. Speaker, the report said quite clearly that capital funds may be required. I think the commitment of the Government of Canada is quite clear too. My colleague, the Minister of the Environment, has said publicly that we are committed to a 50 per cent reduction by 1994. That is the objective which he has staked out. I concur with that and intend to assist in meeting it. The report is an analysis. It is an important first step. We must now refine the technology in order to achieve two things. The first is environmental protection and emission reduction. The second thing, which is equally important, is the efficiency and health of the mining sector itself. Knowing where the Hon. Member comes from and what his interests are, I think he would support that. I want to bear those two objectives in mind. We on this side of the House intend to do what we can to promote the achievement of both those objectives.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, no one argues with these objectives. However, rather than making any more arbitrary decisions and commitments with the provincial Ministers to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions and other harmful airborne particles, would the Minister undertake to meet with industry to ensure that the health of the industry is safeguarded against any arbitrary decisions which have been made in the past?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of State (Mines)): Mr. Speaker, that kind of meeting has taken place in great depth. The industry was very much a part of this report, feels very strongly about it, and indeed concurs with the report. I will be meeting with my colleague, the Minister of Mines, on Wednesday. I intend to raise this matter with him. This should be a tripartite effort on behalf of the Government of Canada, the provinces, and the industry.

With regard to consulting industry, I have my own advisory committee. I have met with the Mining Association of Canada already and will be speaking to them again on Wednesday night. Our commitment is to achieve the objectives in consultation with industry.

VIA RAIL

EDMONTON-VANCOUVER—REQUEST FOR SPEEDY RESTORATION OF SERVICE

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport, if I can get his attention. The Minister has indicated that VIA Rail service between Edmonton and Vancouver will not be restored without provincial participation. Will he indicate to the House why he does not feel that there is a legal, constitutional, and moral responsibility of the federal Government to restore that service as quickly as possible?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona has put two premises to his question, both of which are wrong. I did not say that we would require them to participate in the redevelopment of a line itself. I indicated that because the major benefit of any restoration would be in the area of economic development and tourism, it would be very helpful to have the participation of local municipalities and the provinces on the economic development side of any restoration which might be contemplated. This would include such things as marketing, related tourist facilities or whatever, in order to determine how serious they were in their commitment to the economic development activity within that region. We would be prepared to adhere to our provision of rail service as long as there was a clear indication of their willingness to be a partner in the over-all program of enhancing tourism and economic development activity. That, Mr. Speaker, was the type of proposition we put forward, as opposed to the kind the Hon. Member has outlined.

GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, you will see why the Dodo bird and the dinosaur have more reason to survive in western Canada than this bunch across the floor. They have spent \$780 million to try to save the Minister's seat, and have cut off rail transportation between the largest city in western Canada and Edmonton. Mr. Speaker, it is obscene what the Government has done to those communities. I invite the Minister to tell the House a little truth instead of a little nonsense.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I can think of no one in the House who is better able to comment on Dodo birds than the Hon. Member, seeing as he has to look in the mirror at one every morning. The fact of the matter is—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands.