

Oral Questions

and hopefully I will be able to give the Hon. Member further information once I have had an opportunity to review it.

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CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

TERMINATION OF JOBS

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. In early February I wrote to the Minister and asked him to exercise his ministerial authority to intervene and prohibit the termination of 480 jobs at the Cape Breton Development Corporation. I wish to ask the Minister what actions he is planning to take, or has taken, with regard to protecting 480 jobs in a sector of the Nova Scotia economy that needs those jobs?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, since my hon. friend is from that region, he is well acquainted with the coal industry. He is also aware that at the present time, the industry has considerable excess capacity, which has of course led to a drop in prices. As a result, the industry has new problems to cope with, and this is a fact of life in a competitive market. It must proceed with certain adjustments.

Consequently, the company made a very generous offer to its workers, an offer that was initially rejected, but if I am not mistaken, the conciliator appointed by the Department of Labour is still trying to arrange meetings and arriving at a conciliation decision. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be inappropriate to discuss the matter further at this time.

[English]

REQUEST THAT LAY-OFFS BE HALTED

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. There is not an excess capacity. In fact what is needed is more jobs in the coal industry in order to perform the work which is required.

I wish to ask the Minister if he will not give a directive to the Cape Breton Development Corporation under the auspices of Section 99 of the Financial Administration Act to order management to halt these job terminations, because these job terminations will affect not only the local mining communities in that area, but as announced by the Premier, will negatively affect the entire economy of Nova Scotia. Will the Minister not do that?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly no secret, as I have said before, that the Government is concerned about this problem. We are following developments very carefully on a

daily basis, but I also want to give the Hon. Member the assurance that for some time, the Government has been very much aware of the situation of workers in the Maritimes, and especially those from Cape Breton. We will do everything we can to create opportunities for easier access to new jobs.

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[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

ALBERTA FEDERATION OF WOMEN UNITED FOR THE FAMILY

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State. Why did the Minister bow to political pressure to retroactively fund the Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family under Secretary of State women's program funding when this group had already financed their conference, when it is doubtful that they qualified as a "Status of Women" group, and when they now intend to use the \$8,000 for an anti-abortion campaign? Why did the Minister do this?

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the grant that I think the Hon. Member is talking about was clearly within the guidelines laid out by the program.

AWARDING OF GRANT

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): I wonder if the Minister has listened to his own Deputy who came to the Secretary of State Committee and told us that under no circumstances are any issues related to abortion fundable under the Secretary of State Women's Program criteria? What does the Minister intend to do about this misuse of Secretary of State funds?

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, if it is the grant that I think the Hon. Member is talking about, it is a grant within the program. It would be absolutely wrong for me, or for any other Minister, not to treat everybody fairly when they come forward with a request for a grant.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATIONCLOSURE OF MAJORITY OF POST OFFICES ACROSS CANADA—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Canada Post. In a letter dated February 11, André Villeneuve, Vice-President for Corporate Communications at