

*Oral Questions*

tion. You know, Mr. Speaker, about this perhaps better than most of us because of your own particular interest in the area, but there have been a number of meetings with representatives of the company, the union and the community involved.

I think all hon. members recognize that this situation has not been created by the companies or as a result of any government policies. It was created as a result of a weakening of markets. We are trying through various measures, through the Unemployment Insurance Commission—and the Minister of Employment and Immigration can deal with questions on this—and through discussions with the industry and with the provincial government, to find some way of easing the situation. At the present time I am not in a position to indicate that we have any solution.

However, we have advised a number of Crown corporations that there are likely to be people looking for work in Sudbury. Syncrude, for example, has sent recruiting teams to Sudbury, and so has the Crown corporation, Eldorado. They have been actively looking for people who are looking for work and who have the trades these corporations are looking for.

**Mr. Lawrence:** Regardless of the admission that the minister and the rump cabinet which is left over here today have no solutions whatsoever and regardless of the minister's advocacy that perhaps this is more a provincial matter than a federal matter, has the minister taken any specific steps? The Falconbridge decision affects not only the economy of Sudbury and Canada but also the economy of Norway and the whole European market for Canadian nickel. This is something with which only this government can deal. Have any of the ministers who are left here today had any conferences, for instance, with any of the western European governments about the weakening position of the Canadian nickel industry and about products in Europe? Have there been any discussions with the Norwegian government about this matter? It affects Norway as well.

**Mr. Gillespie:** Mr. Speaker, I have not had a discussion with the Norwegian government, but I have had discussions with the responsible minister of the Ontario government, the government which I think is most intimately concerned with this question.

**Mr. Lawrence:** I am emphasizing that you should be concerned.

**Mr. Gillespie:** The hon. member seems to question whether the province of Ontario has any jurisdiction in this area. I point out to him that the provinces own the resources of this country.

● (1422)

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Why did you intervene in the Supreme Court?

**Mr. Gillespie:** Hon. members opposite seem to find it to their benefit now to suggest that the federal government owns the resources of this country.

[Mr. Gillespie.]

**An hon. Member:** No we don't.

**Mr. Gillespie:** I remind them that not only do the provinces own the resources and set royalty rates, but the provinces also set the pollution control standards for the mining industry. It was against this kind of background that yesterday I contacted the mines minister for the province of Ontario to see if it is possible for him and his colleagues and I and my colleagues to meet in the very near future in order to prepare for a federal-provincial conference of mines ministers. I hope it will be possible to have a national conference of mines ministers in January. I have already sent out a telex to the ministers suggesting the date of January 20.

**Mr. Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to emphasize to this particular minister and the other ministers present today is that this is not only a national problem, not provincial but is an international problem in which only this government, unfortunately, can act. Is anything being done in the international area on which this industry depends for markets? The government has been warned about difficulties on the international scene for over 12 months.

**Mr. Gillespie:** Mr. Speaker, I think it might be of interest to the hon. member and the House to know that I sent instructions to our ambassador in Jakarta, which is the host of a conference of copper producers taking place at the moment and suggested that they should take action—this is the CEPEC organization—to reduce production of copper. The copper industry could well face the same kind of situation that the nickel industry finds itself in today. I was pleased to read today that the majority of copper producers have taken the position of reducing production and to that extent their action should ease or stabilize copper production in this country.

LAY-OFFS AT FALCONBRIDGE MINE—CONSIDERATION BY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, may I put a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The minister has referred to a national conference of provincial and federal mines ministers to be held sometime next year. Is the minister aware of the meeting of the national advisory committee of the mining industry tomorrow? If so, could he inform the House if he has taken any steps to have that committee consider what might be done to relieve the situation that has arisen in the mining industry with not only the loss of jobs at Falconbridge but the other loss of jobs? Does he intend to put any proposal to that committee tomorrow that might help the situation?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the meeting of the national advisory committee on the mineral industries tomorrow is to prepare for the kind of round I have discussed with various provinces leading up to a federal-provincial conference. The meeting tomorrow will be focused primarily on the mining industry as a whole, not just the nickel industry though quite clearly senior representatives of that industry will be present.