

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take that question as notice, speak to my colleagues, and return to the House with the appropriate explanation for both of those reductions.

[Translation]

FINANCING PROMISED TO QUEBEC VITAL INDUSTRIES

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. What with all the protests in Quebec concerning Domtar, how can the Prime Minister justify what appears to be an outright withdrawal of financing promised to vital Quebec industries?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this must be the NDP's Quebec day. We do get those days every other month. I encourage you and I congratulate you. Now then, I have been trying for three or four days to indicate to my colleagues that we were forced to turn down a direct request for a \$100 million grant to Domtar, which is a very prosperous undertaking, a company which has posted huge profits in recent years and which is structurally sound. The huge deficit we have inherited did force us to reject a direct \$100 million grant, but it does not rule out the possibility of co-operating in other fields with a view to helping Domtar and its shareholders carry out a major job-creating project in Quebec. I am sure my colleague will understand that we are considering the file and the requests—that one and others—with some sympathy.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

DOMTAR—DATE OF MEETING BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER AND PREMIER LÉVESQUE

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Right Hon. Prime Minister, but first of all, I want to say how surprised I am to see that he has decided, in an effort to hide his lack of involvement in the Domtar affair, to quote an inaccurate report to the effect that the Leader of the Opposition is now opposed to the Government granting the subsidy. Let us be honest about it. The Prime Minister knows that he has received a letter requesting Government assistance. The Leader of the Opposition asked him about it this week in the House. Members of the Liberal Party and his own Party are pressuring him to grant the subsidy—

Some Hon. Members: Question!

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): The question is quite simple. When does the Prime Minister intend to meet the

Quebec Premier so that this matter can be resolved? That is the key issue.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in view of this appalling attack on the integrity of the members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, I would like to quote from the article published yesterday in the newspaper *La Presse* and written by an experienced reporter, Mr. Lavoie, who says the following: "This ambiguous position of the Liberal Leader removes a trump card from the hands of the Quebec Members of Parliament, who had unexpectedly found a new hobby-horse in the Domtar affair. Now that their own leader had sided with the decision made by Mr. Stevens, they will find it difficult to continue their fight on this issue."

You are obviously embarrassed because of the hypocrisy of the Liberal position and the fact that you have reversed your stand before the people of Quebec. The answer to the other question asked by the Hon. Member is that I am meeting Mr. Lévesque on March 8.

● (1140)

INQUIRY WHEN DOMTAR SITUATION WILL BE RESOLVED

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I simply want to point out that I spoke to my Leader this morning and that this article is inaccurate. I can also add that the Government can gain nothing by trying to play politics on the back of the Liberal Party with this issue. When will the Government resolve the Domtar situation? This is what the people in Windsor want to know. It is not by casting aspersions on the Liberal Party that the Government can solve the problem of the people who fear for their jobs in that region.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): You are not being as logical in this affair as your Leader was in relation to the Senate issue when he said in this House that he approved the role of the federal Parliament and would oppose any obstruction by the Senate. He is now approving the action of the Liberal senators, which is costing millions of dollars to Canadian taxpayers. This is what is happening because of the flip-flop of the Liberal Party.

We shall work loyally and without hypocrisy. As noted in the press, we shall co-operate loyally with the Quebec Government, the Domtar company, its employees and the social groups involved in this affair. Our co-operation will be sincere and not—