

THE ECONOMY

NORTHERN ONTARIO RECOVERY PACKAGE

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. The economy of northern Ontario is at its lowest ebb since the days of the Diefenbaker Government.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Penner: Already extraordinarily high unemployment will be made even higher as a result of the U.S. tariff on lumber. Is the Prime Minister prepared now to reveal to the House and the people of northern Ontario the details of the so-called recovery package for northern Ontario, details that were shrouded in secrecy when the Conservative caucus met in Sudbury this weekend?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to tell the House that, perhaps for the first time in the history of northern Ontario, cabinet Ministers visited the area to deal with the real issues affecting northern Ontario. It was a very positive meeting.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Very many suggestions were made. There is a clear opportunity to build upon the natural strengths of northern Ontario. The Solicitor General is taking a leading part in stimulating the discussions and the policy development in that area. Just watch us. We will bring forth a very good policy which will be good for northern Ontario and for Canada.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INQUIRY

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he would not be frank and admit to the House that this so-called recovery package for northern Ontario is nothing other than a philosophical statement on regional development which lacks substance? It is nothing but a little soft sound and fuzzy fury that signify nothing.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has been a Member of the House since 1968. He represented a Government that had been in power from 1968 until 1984. He should be the last guy to criticize by pointing out what is missing in that area because he has failed to do his job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Am I frank? The answer to that is yes. Even my second name is Frank.

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: One might say that's the only thing frank about you.

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PATENT ACT

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS AFFECTING GENERIC DRUGS— CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. I have a confidential document sent by the Minister of National Health and Welfare to delegates at the Conservative policy conference in Calgary. In it the Minister says about the proposed generic drug law changes that they "may benefit from trade discussions with the United States". Can the Minister tell the House the nature of the linkage between generic drugs and free trade? The statement made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare contradicts the statement made in the House on April 14 by the former Minister for International Trade who said that "generics were not in any way tied to the present discussions".

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the Hon. Member and the House that the proposed changes to Canada's patent law will be made for the benefit of Canada and Canadians and for the benefit of research and development that will affect the health of Canadians. When he sees the entire package and analyses the facts, I am sure the Hon. Member will agree.

CONTENT OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): That answer does not deal with my question at all so I would like to put a further question to either Minister. The Minister of National Health and Welfare also said in that document that "the recommendations contained in Dr. Harry Eastman's report on pharmaceuticals are under review by the Government and may form part of the discussions with the Americans". In the discussions on free trade, is the question of the patent law with regard to drugs being discussed—yes or no?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member should be aware, there have been discussions on Canada's patent laws since 1969 when the patent laws were changed. All of our trading partners are vitally interested in this question. As the Hon. Member may surmise, there is a great deal of interest in intellectual property generally, but in terms of the specific proposal we are making it is because it is of benefit to Canada and Canadians that we are proceeding with it.