

the lake, which of course was not in the best interests of environmental control and the ever pressing attempt to keep this beautiful lake from becoming polluted in any way.

However, because the tender to sink these barges was lower, the Department of Transport accepted this tender without any consultation with people in the area concerned about these matters. The first the safety council, or anyone else for that matter, knew of what was happening to these barges was when they discovered that they were no longer in their former resting place. Interested citizens then went out in their boats to see if they could find out what had happened to the barges.

• (2210)

They were able to discover them by sighting, from boats on the surface of the lake, drums that had been attached to the barges to float and then had been sunk with the barges. Apparently the company which contracted for the removal had gone around Kelowna buying up all the old drums they could, taken these out and attached them to the barges so they could float, then pulled them out in a straight line about 300 yards off shore and sunk them by taking some of the drums away. Many of the drums were still attached and some local skin divers went down to inspect what had really happened. These drums were attached with flimsy ropes. They let five of them go and the five drums came up out of the water like torpedoes.

The minister said that the barges were not a hazard to transportation, nor were they a contaminant. Because of the questions raised by people in the area in the past few days, the drums have now all been released from these barges but this has in no way satisfied the people of the area. They believe this to be a shocking display, by supposedly responsible departments of the federal government, to be contaminating the lake with these old barges in what may prove over the years, as they continue to disintegrate and dead-heads appear on the lake, a certain hazard to transportation. It is also a shocking example and the setting of a terrible precedent at this time when people are crying out for environmental control. People are now saying that if the federal government can dispose of garbage in the lake, why can't they?

I call on the departments responsible in the federal government to practice what they preach, to become responsible and remove these barges from the lake. This is the kind of thing that should be happening, in my opinion, in make-work programs. Let us mean it when we say it pays to be clean. Let us not be secretive about what is going on. I ask the government to consult with people and organizations such as safety councils. They are responsible; they want to help; they want things done properly.

Mr. Len Marchand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Dubé). I am pleased for another reason as well. I was born and raised on the shores of Lake Okanagan. My ancestors were there to greet many of those who came later. When the hon. member speaks of the beauty of this area, I can with some knowledge agree with him.

25714-714

Adjournment Debate

There are two points I wish to make tonight in connection with the question raised by the hon. member. First, a contract has been let, funded by the Department of Transport, in the amount of \$2,745 for the removal of loose or potentially hazardous material from the barges. Second, the removal of the air-filled barrels is being carried out by the original contractor at his own expense. It was felt that this was his responsibility because this method of sinking the barges was originally adopted by him.

The work commenced on February 5 and a Department of Public Works engineer inspected the progress being made on February 6. I do not have an up to date report but I am advised that the removal of the barrels should have been completed in one day and that the entire work should have been completed within one week.

It is a regrettable situation, as the hon. member stated, but I should like to remind the House that this problem goes back about 12 years. It is not new; it is one which existed when another government was in power, so let us not introduce any political partisanship here. Mistakes were no doubt made along the way, but another government also had a chance to correct them. I intend to pay personal attention to this question. I think it is a wrong practice to sink barges in water as a means of getting rid of them. It is a practice which really ought not to be followed.

INDUSTRY—POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF ABITIBI MILL IN SAULT STE. MARIE—USE MADE OF DEVELOPMENT GRANTS BY COMPANY

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to elaborate a question which I addressed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) in the House yesterday in relation to the threatened closure of the Abitibi paper mill in Sault Ste. Marie. A few days ago the following notice appeared in that paper mill; it was addressed to hourly-rated employees.

Effective February 18, 1973, the following conditions must be agreed to in order to protect the operation of the mill at Sault Ste. Marie:

1. When the mill is operating less than seven days per week, we will revert to all clauses in the six day agreement as to hourly rates, statutory holidays, wire time, premium pay and working conditions.

- In the event continuous operations are resumed, the continuous operation rates and conditions applicable will apply during such period of operation.

- The floating holidays to be reduced by three.

- The premium costs for the Abitibi disability benefit plan will be shared on a 50-50 basis by the company and the employees on the actual rates projected by the insurance carrier for this division.

- Remove the upgraded classifications from the papermakers wage scale for running groundwood specialties and double stacks.

- Extend the present agreement for one full year to April 30, 1974. The situation will again be reviewed on February 1, 1974.

This notice has been given to the workers and to the union and the company refuses to discuss what in effect amounts to an ultimatum. I am frankly appalled by the attitude of the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Company in a day and age when supposedly we have progressed to enlightened labour-management relations. As I say, it amounts to