

Oral Questions

September, 1987, at what UAW people say will be a cost of 5,000 Canadian jobs. What immediate steps is the Government taking to prevent that transfer of production and jobs, something which has nothing to do with Canadian quality, productivity, or efficiency?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out by the hon. gentleman, the responsible Ministers are absent. I will take the question—

Mr. Foster: They are always absent.

Mr. Nielsen: The Hon. Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion is unavoidably absent. I am sure the Hon. Member for Algoma realizes that.

Mr. Foster: What about the rest of them?

Mr. Nielsen: The Acting Minister is away on Government business. I will take the question as notice and see to it that an answer is supplied to the Hon. Member at the earliest possible moment.

AUTO PACT PROVISIONS

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, will the Government immediately tell General Motors that any such transfer of production and jobs is unacceptable to Canadians and contrary to the Canadian-content provisions of the Auto Pact and that, if GM persists with these plans, it will apply the Canadian-content provisions of the Auto Pact to the fullest extent? Will the Government make that undertaking today?

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Bissonnette (Minister of State (Small Businesses)): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that General Motors announced a few months ago it intended to reinvest one billion dollars in Canadian plants or in Canada. So we are already on the right track... we are negotiating with General Motors and we believe that the jobs will be saved and in fact, that more jobs will be created.

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[*English*]

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY

REPAIR OF LOCK AND ESTIMATE OF LOSSES

Mr. Allan Pietz (Welland): Mr. Speaker, with the planned opening this evening of the Welland Canal after having been shut down—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Pietz:—for three and a half weeks because of the failure of Lock 7 in Thorold, I would like to ask the Minister of State for Transport if she is in a position to give an estimate both of the cost of repairing the lock and the costs to its users,

so that we may correlate this to the plan for the super locks that was placed—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, the Canal will reopen sometime tonight. It is likely that the first ship in will be the *Furia*. We do not have all the figures for the cost of the unfortunate event that occurred but as soon as the bills come in we will be able to make those figures public. I must say that there have been no lawsuits in this situation but there have been some Notices of Intent filed.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ST. CLAIR RIVER—PRESENCE OF DIOXIN

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. A Conservative MP and local officials have now suggested that the tarry blob near Sarnia with what the Minister has called horrible levels of cancer-causing dioxin has been known about for 10 years. Will the Minister tell the House when the Ministry first learned of the frightening levels of dioxin in the St. Clair River, and if it has known about it for years, why the first public confirmation came just in the last month?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly put the Hon. Member's mind at ease on that question. The first tarry patch containing hazardous chemicals was found in August, 1984, through a routine check of the water in question as part of an over-all analysis of the water in the Great Lakes. It was not determined that dioxin, for example, was in the tarry patch until a year later in August, 1985. A second patch was found in September, 1985. I learned about it as a result of its final analysis on October 26, and on October 26, the very same day, I set up a team of high-powered experts from the United States and Canada to deal with the question.

ORIGIN OF DIOXIN—REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, given the uncertainty over where the dioxin originates as it does not seem that products that produce dioxin are made in the area, will the Minister order an investigation into possible transport from the United States to Canada by American companies of dioxin-carrying wastes for disposal in the deep-well systems of sister companies in Canada? This could very well be one of the possible sources.

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think that is a worth-while suggestion and I will give it the careful consideration it richly deserves.