

Oral Questions

respect of the matter. So now, I ask him whether the policy of not granting licenses for the export of arms to Turkey at this time has been modified and, if so, how has the situation changed to justify this change in policy?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member that at present there is no general embargo on the export to Turkey of arms or military equipment, although shipments of such material were suspended for a time following the events in Cyprus of last July and August. At present, each application for arms or military equipment to Turkey would be examined in the light of the existing and foreseeable political and military situation in the area before an export permit is granted. As the House is aware, it is not the policy of the government to allow the export of arms or military equipment to an area where military hostilities are taking place.

Mr. Brewin: In view of the fact that Canada has peace-keeping forces in Cyprus, would it not be rather short-sighted, to put it mildly, to put weapons in the hands of those who might in certain eventualities use them against our own troops?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes, I think one would have to agree with the hon. member. If that were the eventuality and if one shipped arms against that eventuality, it would indeed be shortsighted action. I do not regard it as an eventuality.

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● (1450)

[Translation]

INDUSTRY**ALCAN—REASON FOR REDUCTION IN PRODUCTION AND LAY-OFFS**

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

As the North American aluminum producers in the United States as well as in Canada have recently announced a total reduction in production averaging about 13 per cent, can the minister tell us as a result of such move by Alcan in Canada, at Arvida, Shawinigan or even Kitimat, if it is an isolated decision or a step taken in co-operation with its competitors, as it sometimes happen now, if in any case he intends to investigate this matter or if at least he has met an authority of Alcan in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the hon. member is asking about the layoffs in the aluminum industry, particularly of Alcan Canada. I have met with officials of that corporation, and I have been told that the reason for those layoffs and reductions in production is the slowing down of their markets abroad, particularly in the United States.

[Mr. Brewin.]

[Translation]

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Since 700 people have been laid off, temporarily or not, by Alcan in Arvida or Shawinigan, can the minister tell us whether he knows when the company will recall its employees and whether he intends to ensure with his provincial counterpart that any potential establishment of an aluminum company on the outskirts of Quebec City by the Quebec government does not result in increased unemployment for Alcan of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, an area where the rate of unemployment is already 15 or 20 per cent?

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will take the representations of the hon. member as valuable suggestions and bring myself up to date on the details. I will try to get an answer for him as soon as possible.

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[Translation]

COMBINES**SUGGESTED INVESTIGATION OF REASON FOR REDUCTION IN PRODUCTION BY ALCAN**

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I have another supplementary, this time for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

In order to ascertain whether Alcan, especially in the Lac Saint-Jean area, has reduced its production in order to create a scarcity of aluminum products and thus keep prices increasing, would the minister be willing to order an inquiry by the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, and has he taken any measure in that respect, either on the sole initiative of his department or with his provincial counterpart from the independent government of Quebec?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should be well aware that, under the Combines Investigation Act, the director of inquiries and combines looks into the matter every time he thinks appropriate to do so, and that I am not in a position to confirm or deny that an inquiry is underway.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE**POTATOES—REQUEST FOR AID TO PRODUCERS AND TABLING OF MARKETING STUDY**

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. It is with respect to the very serious situation in the potato industry in eastern Canada of which I am sure the minister is well aware. In view of the decrease on a year to year basis in terms of the price to the farmer of some 75 per cent in terms of marketable potatoes and the present situation whereby potato growers in eastern Canada are selling