

Adjournment Debate

Ore". In another paper it says, "Gray To Ask Why Steel Firms Using So Much Imported Ore".

● (2220)

I assumed that we were going to get action. By June 5 I saw that no action was taking place, and I realized that Canadian jobs were being lost and that our balance of trade was getting worse as a result of this situation, so I wrote to the minister asking what was happening. "I interpreted his response at that time as being quite favourable. As a result I had been waiting eagerly for an announcement by his office about the details of such a meeting. Unfortunately, I had not heard of such an announcement during the intervening weeks since my question."

Then last week the intention of Iron Ore Company of Canada to lay off 3,000 workers in Quebec came to light, and our New Democratic Party spokesman on economic affairs, the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae), raised the same questions in the House. At that time, on June 11, the minister replied that he was still trying to set up a meeting with the heads of the Canadian steel industry. That was on June 11, one month after I had originally raised the question in the House.

What did the minister say? He said he would ask these people if the steel companies are importing 45 per cent of their ore. It took him one month. Presumably he still has not set up a meeting to find the answer to a very simple question. It is not a new matter. It is a matter which was raised prior to the sitting of this House. It was raised in the last two Parliaments, yet the minister is still trying to set up a meeting. When the shoe is on the other foot and when the industry wants to meet with the government then we see action.

I would like to quote from *Business Week* and give certain quotes from spokesmen of various Canadian steel industries. The head of Stelco, Mr. Gordon, said:

Government authorities and Canadian steelmakers have cultivated a warm relationship, and it works so well that the industry apparently feels no need for either a trade organization or company lobbyists in Ottawa.

Mr. Macnamara, the head of Algoma Steel, said:

When we see a problem that might be damaging to the industry as a whole . . . we meet with the government to try and resolve it. I don't know why that is impossible in the U.S., but at least in Canada we have an audience.

The steel industry has no trouble getting the ear of the minister, but when the minister wants to have the ear of the steel industry, he cannot even set up a meeting. This Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce talked very toughly about foreign investment in the past. He has talked toughly about the need for control of our own economy, yet it takes over one month to set up a meeting.

We have iron ore sitting in the slag heaps in Sudbury. In the provincial parliament the New Democratic Party has refuted the argument that Canadian iron ore cannot be used in the development of steel in Canada. Bud Germa, Elie Martel and Michael Cassidy have refuted this and other arguments which have been used as excuses for closing down Canadian indus-

tries and for laying off Canadian workers. What we need is a strategy to develop the use of our resources. What we need is an industrial strategy to meet the needs of young people, native Canadians, miners and women in the underdeveloped regions of this country. What we do not need is a government which cannot even set up a meeting with the steel companies. Once that meeting is set up, what are they going to do? If it takes one month to set up a meeting, how long is it going to take for them to come to a decision to do something? How many more Canadians have to be laid off? There have been 3,000 notices of lay-offs since we first asked this question a month ago, and nothing has happened.

[Translation]

Mr. Claude-André Lachance (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State, Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce had an opportunity to look seriously into the matter of lay-offs in the iron ore mining industry. The U.S. recession and the general reduction in demand are at the roots of the problem; indeed, the present state of the automobile industry is an obvious illustration of that. Consequently, in both Canada and the United States the mining industry is operating at a reduced rate. The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources are constantly monitoring the variations in supply and demand. The Government of Canada intends to raise with the Canadian steel industry the issue of ore supplies and their sources.

Very soon, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) and his colleague, the Minister of State for Mines (Mrs. Erola), are scheduled to meet the supply officers of the companies involved. In addition, at a later meeting, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce along with the officials and leaders of the steel industry will be discussing among other things ways to allow a more rational use of Canadian sources of iron ore. It is the common wish of the government and the industry to find appropriate solutions to all questions having to do with supply and related problems. We are confident those discussions will result in concrete results. Incidentally, and to reiterate what my colleague from Windsor West said on May 12 last, we can be proud of the Canadian steel industry which is 100 per cent controlled by national interests and passes for the most productive, efficient and modern in the world. It is in that spirit that we are advocating policies to increase the processing of Canadian resources at home.

Mr. Murphy: When?

Mr. Lachance: To answer the hon. member, very soon.

● (2225)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At 10.27 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.