

NATURAL RESOURCES

LOCATION OF URANIUM REFINERY IN SUDBURY BASIN TO ALLEVIATE LAY-OFFS IN NICKEL INDUSTRY

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources—the do-nothing minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rodriguez: This past weekend, 3,000 jobs went down the drain and this minister refused to do anything about it. These lay-offs will have a very serious effect on the Sudbury basin, which is a one-industry economy. The regional council of Sudbury, with Your Honour's support and instruction, petitioned the cabinet to ask Eldorado Nuclear to locate a uranium refinery in the Sudbury basin. Will the minister advise whether he and his cabinet colleagues have reached a decision with regard to this request from Your Honour and the people of the Sudbury basin? If not, when can we expect such a decision?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, a number of areas around the province of Ontario have expressed an interest in the second Eldorado uranium refinery. While the government has considered a number of these, it is not yet in a position to make any announcement. Departmental work is going on at the present time. There have been discussions with regard to the Sudbury area. That is about as far as I can go at the moment.

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INDUSTRY

GOVERNMENT'S DISCUSSIONS WITH AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURERS RESPECTING LOCATION OF PLANTS

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the points I raised earlier with regard to the effect of the lay-offs in the Sudbury basin, and the fact that in this House, on February 2, the minister announced he was having discussions with the three major automotive producers with regard to the location of auto parts plants in Canada, and the fact that one was slated for Windsor, can the minister advise whether in those discussions they specifically discussed other locations in Canada, and in particular in the Sudbury basin?

● (1502)

Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, other locations have been discussed. I think that in conjunction with the province of Ontario, a number of spots, including Sudbury, were discussed with the automotive companies.

Privilege—Mr. Broadbent

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

PRESENCE OF MINISTER IN HOUSE RATHER THAN AT FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations. In view of the fact that there is a conference being held down the road a little way, at the Convention Centre, involving federal-provincial relations with the various provincial premiers, is the presence in the House today of the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations a conscious act in the hope that this will help resolve some federal-provincial problems, or has he been told to stay away?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Mr. Speaker, my presence in the House today was required to give the hon. member the opportunity of asking a question.

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[English]

PRIVILEGE

MR. BROADBENT—REPLY OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DURING QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege in relation to an answer in the House today by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) indicating a continuation of the government's decision to proceed with Bill C-25.

I should like to say at the outset, because the premier is not here to defend himself, that the Deputy Prime Minister misinformed the House completely when he cited Premier Allan Blakeney of the province of Saskatchewan as supporting the government's position. Today at the first ministers' conference the premier of the province of Saskatchewan reiterated the common concern of the New Democratic Party that the pipeline be proceeded with on the basis that jobs for Canadians are guaranteed. This is just the opposite to what we find in this bill.

The point of privilege I have is that by proceeding with this bill this afternoon the government is insulting the intelligence of every member of parliament and making a sham of debating procedures in this chamber. If debate means anything in the House of Commons in relation to a piece of legislation, we are supposed to have before us the essence or substance of the material we are debating. The answer given in the House this afternoon by the Deputy Prime Minister was in fact extraordinary.

The logic of the Deputy Prime Minister's argument is that we can debate this measure today, tomorrow, the next day and presumably ad nauseam, but we have his assurance that we do not have to reach a decision on the debate until the National Energy Board makes its final recommendation. How absurd can we get? If we follow the Deputy Prime Minister's reason-