

position of lumber firms and the chemical industry, and the tremendous decline in Canada's basic industries, all contributing to unemployment?

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I have had representations from the Canadian forest industry, particularly the pulp and paper industry which is having a very difficult time at present as is the pulp and paper industry throughout the world. The profits of the United States pulp and paper industry went down by one-third in the first quarter of this year.

**Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, concerning Canadian industry and Canadian employment, is the minister going to take positive measures in his budget to reverse this particular trend?

**Mr. Benson:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot say what action I intend to take in the budget. I can say I have had representations from the pulp and paper industry.

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#### NATIONAL SECURITY

##### REFUSAL TO PAY RANSOM MONEY TO KIDNAPPERS OF LATE PIERRE LAPORTE

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Justice who has been away a number of days—I make nothing of that—I should like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. Last week I asked a question of the Minister of Justice in reference to an alleged statement by Jacques Sauriol that the Canadian government had knowledge that a ransom was paid for the release of Mr. Cross and that the federal government acquiesced and knew about it but at the same time refused the same kind of remedy in reference to the late Mr. Laporte. I have a letter to that effect and since allegations have been made at a press conference by Mr. Sauriol I would hope the Acting Prime Minister in his capacity of Secretary of State for External Affairs would now set the record straight.

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to set the record straight. If the hon. gentleman could let me look at the letter I would endeavour to have an answer for him as soon as possible.

**Mr. Woolliams:** Mr. Speaker, this matter has been hanging around for the last six or seven days and I am sure it has been brought to the attention of the Acting Prime Minister. Surely he can answer the question now. Did the government have knowledge that a ransom was paid for the release of Mr. Cross by any power or group of people and the same action was refused on behalf of the late Mr. Laporte?

**Mr. Sharp:** The answer to the question is no, Mr. Speaker.

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#### Inquiries of the Ministry

##### INDUSTRY

##### PAUL MANEY LABORATORIES—ACTION TO PREVENT SALE TO FOREIGN INTERESTS

**Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It arises from the welcome statement he made today about the availability of generic drugs in Canada. In view of the minister's program and the need to maintain a viable, healthy Canadian generic drug industry, is it his intention to look into the situation of Paul Maney Laboratories and prevent its sale to foreign interests?

**Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I do not consider that aspect of the problem to be a direct responsibility of my department but rather a problem to be looked at by the entire government.

**Mr. Saltzman:** Is the minister giving consideration to the establishment of a Crown corporation for the manufacture of drugs in Canada?

**Mr. Munro:** Not at this time, Mr. Speaker.

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##### POST OFFICE

##### LAST DAILY PICK-UP OF MAIL IN CITIES

**Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants):** My question is addressed to the Postmaster General soon to be. I have given him notice of it. Does the Post Office intend to continue the 3 p.m. pick-up of mail in major cities as the latest hour of daily pick-up, or will this controversial program be dropped?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Minister without Portfolio):** Mr. Speaker, the time of mail pick-up has been changed in several important cities in order that we may ensure a better delivery service. We are also asking our clients to put their mail in the boxes earlier in order to improve the service.

[English]

##### SUGGESTED LOWER POSTAL RATES FOR CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova):** I should like to ask the minister responsible for the Post Office whether he has received representations and whether he is giving any thought to lowering postage rates for charitable organizations in view of the many representations that have been made in this regard?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté (Minister without Portfolio):** Mr. Speaker, I have received only one request on behalf of three different organizations and although we are considering it now, I must say that I am not very optimistic.