

minister and the government has never been on top of the employment situation in the mining industry of this country; and in view of the fact that Falconbridge Nickel Mines has announced already hundreds of lay-offs, and hundreds more are going to be made, can the minister tell the House if he intends to meet with the boards of directors of Falconbridge Nickel Mines and the other mining companies that are threatening lay-offs in order to discuss that situation?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, already I have met with the chief executive officers of INCO. I have also been in touch with the chief executive officer of Falconbridge. There may well be further meetings with respect to these companies and others. A number of mining companies have been to Sudbury trying to recruit miners for their operations across the country. They have not yet been successful in being able to recruit very many. This seems to support the contention of my colleague who has just answered questions on this particular point. I can assure the hon. member, if there are miners in the Sudbury area looking for employment with Eldorado or with some of the other significant mining corporations, that there are openings available.

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FINANCE

PROPOSED IMPOSITION OF TARIFF ON IMPORTED NICKEL CARBONATE AND FLUORSPAR

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, the mining companies which have gone into Sudbury looking for employees have asked for three years of experience, and the lay-off date is two years, 161 days. Therefore, the minister's reply is full of baloney. I want to direct my supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that a certain amount of unemployment in this country is due to decisions by corporations to purchase minerals abroad which could be mined in Canada, such as the decision by Alcan to close down their fluorspar mine in St. Lawrence and the action of Sherritt Gordon in importing nickel carbonate for the Saskatchewan plant, can the minister tell the House if he is now considering placing a temporary tariff on the import of fluorspar or nickel carbonate, possibly in the neighbourhood of the 13 per cent Japanese tariff against imported nickel?

● (1427)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered this question a few weeks ago. We have examined that proposal and the product imported by the Aluminium Company of Canada Ltd. does not replace the one produced in Newfoundland. So one cannot be replaced by the other. I am no expert but that is what the experts told me in my department.

Oral Questions

As to the other part of the question, I think that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has already given an answer in the House a few weeks ago.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT FOLLOWING SIGNING OF HIGHWAY AGREEMENT WITH QUEBEC

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. On June 22, 1977 the minister announced the signature of an agreement with a minister of the Quebec government dealing mostly with forestry development and some road systems in Quebec involving \$440 million. Could the minister tell the House if following that agreement there have been other new developments or whether only that agreement dealing mainly with road construction was signed?

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, some steps were taken since the signature of the agreement. Some contracts were awarded by the provincial government responsible for carrying out the agreement as such for highways, access roads in forest areas and reforestation. In those three areas, agreements have been signed. Action is under way, jobs have been created and others will be created in the next few months.

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[English]

AIR TRANSPORT

POSSIBILITY POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT RESULT OF ENFORCEMENT OF SAFETY REGULATIONS—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF REPORT

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. It arises out of the telex that was released to the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, which was sent by the Director of the Aeronautical Licensing and Inspection Branch of MOT which alluded, among other things, to the possibility of political embarrassment as a result of the enforcement of air regulations. Has the minister had an opportunity to review the telex and to discuss the contents with the director, Mr. Bolduc, and, if so, can he provide an explanation to the House in connection with that matter?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have found that similar words have been used in other cases in connection with investigations into air carrier licensing and the like. At this point I understand that the words were meant to mean that very important civil liberties issues are involved for the carriers since licences might be suspended. I have indicated that I do not think the words used carry that message very