

*Adjournment Debate*

Minister of Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) and other squandering of funds, responses given by this Government are unsatisfactory. I am sure the Parliamentary Secretary across the way will provide a better explanation today. If not, I am sure he would not be here because he is a good, honest and sincere Member. He would want to provide this House with correct facts.

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I respond to the concerns raised by the Hon. Member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell (Mr. Boudria). He originally addressed this matter in the House of Commons on May 3, as reported at page 4380 of *Hansard*.

On January 24, 1985, Mr. Brian O'Regan, Vice-President of public affairs at Northern Telecom, requested that Canada undertake an official mission to support Northern Telecom's efforts in securing a \$487 million contract with the Algerian Government, representing 7,000 person years of employment for Canadians over a five-year period. This request was supported by officials in both the Department of Communications and External Affairs and was then recommended to the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse).

The main thrust of this official mission was to support the bid of Northern Telecom. In view of the considerable Canadian business interests in various industries currently under way in northern Africa and the Middle East, it was deemed opportune and useful for the Minister to take advantage of the request from Northern Telecom to show the Government of Canada's support for these additional business endeavors.

These companies included Radio Canada International; Bell Canada International, as well as other Canadian companies with \$400 million in projects completed to date in addition to \$1 billion in potential contracts.

With the preliminary planning for a visit to Algeria under way, External Affairs requested through the international relations branch in the Department of Communications that the Minister officiate at the opening of the new Canadian embassy complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In addition to this request, Department of Communications officials informed the Minister that a Montreal-based company was pursuing a major spectrum management contract with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As the responsibility for this contract was in the control of Dr. Kayal, Minister of Post, Telephone and Telecommunications for the kingdom, a meeting was requested between the two Ministers to discuss the contract as well as to renew co-operation between Canada and Saudi Arabia.

As is normal practice, commercial flights for this trip were investigated but, given the commitment of the Minister for April 9 to address the conference of the Canadian Cable and Television Association in Toronto, the requirement for his attendance at the meeting of the Priorities and Planning Committee on April 16, 1985, as well as the religious holidays one must observe when in Moslem countries, the commercial option was impossible.

To demonstrate the logistical problems experienced in travelling to Algeria, it should be noted that the two ministerial assistants, who accompanied the Minister during his visit in the Middle East, travelled to Paris commercially where they experienced a 36-hour delay before available seating on a connecting flight to Algiers could be confirmed.

The Hon. Member also made a number of substantially incorrect statements in a radio interview in April. First, the Minister's trip did not take him to Israel as alleged by the Hon. Member. The stop-over in Greece was a mandatory refuelling stop and maintenance operation in accordance with Department of Transport regulations. It was not a stop requested by the Minister or any of the passengers.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this information answers some of the concerns of the Hon. Member. I will be happy to answer any further questions he wishes to place to me at a later date.

● (1830)

ENERGY—ANNOUNCED CLOSURE OF CAPE BRETON HEAVY WATER PLANTS. (B) GOVERNMENT'S POSITION. (C) MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time concerning a question I directed to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) on May 24, 1985 regarding the announced closure of the Cape Breton heavy water plants in Glace Bay and in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia.

At that time I indicated to the House, and in particular to the Minister of Finance, that certain assurances were given to the workers of those two plants prior to the particular announcement which was made in the Budget. Again I want to quote, for Your Honour's edification, as I am sure you are concerned about the workers and their families in my riding and in the Port Hawkesbury area, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) who indicated on a couple of occasions that there would be no closure of those plants until alternate employment took place. In fact she indicated that her plans to close the two heavy water plants would not proceed before alternate employment could be found for displaced workers.

Since the closure of the two heavy water plants there have been no new jobs for those workers, absolutely none. There has been an agreement by the union representing the employees and by management representatives in regard to a severance package. That particular severance package goes beyond the collective agreement. It is certainly not a rich package, by any means; it is not rich at all. It fails to address a number of important measures. However, in view of the position of the union, which has attempted to represent those workers to the best of its ability, that was all that management and the Government was prepared to do for those employees. The bigger issue is alternate employment.

The Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens) gave the impression to many media members that something great and specific would be done forthwith. All