

to power, which is a lot better than the 5,000 jobs a month being lost before.

[English]

CONTENT OF ALLEGED LETTER

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor-Walkerville): Did the Minister not say in a letter dated January 6 that it should be the policy of her Ministry to support the recruitment efforts of the PC Youth Federation, and that that should be the priority for the Government?

An Hon. Member: Here's the letter. Here's the letter.

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): I have no idea to which letter the Hon. Member is referring. I would very much like to see it. For the time being I think that the reports of my demise were grossly exaggerated. I will be working for all the young people of Canada with my colleagues.

* * *

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment. I have examined her answers yesterday with respect to the invasion of privacy by Peat Marwick and I want to ask her the following question. Is she admitting that her personal staff were not familiar with Section 114 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, which expressly forbids the release of confidential information without her consent? Is that the level of competence in her office?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for raising this question again. I want to tell him and the House that I have now received a preliminary response to the investigation that I requested. I find that proper procedures were not followed and, therefore, I have taken the following action. I have recalled all the information from Peat Marwick; I have undertaken and directed the Department that this not happen again, and I have directed the Deputy Minister to put in place procedures to ensure that it will not happen again.

ROLE PLAYED BY MINISTERIAL STAFF

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Minister has taken that action. I would like to ask her whether the investigation that was conducted also examined the role played in this matter by the people in her office and herself, the diligence which they applied, and their familiarity with the provisions in the Act. Were they investigated as well?

Oral Questions

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, there is a full investigation going on. I have given a preliminary report. I said yesterday that I did not know of the details of this survey or, indeed, of a number of surveys which are carried out. I may say that applies to my staff as well. I would say to the Hon. Member that the reason I am looking at this in detail is to look at where it has been in past years, what has happened under previous administrations, and how we come to grips with something that has not been carried out properly.

* * *

FORESTRY

SOFTWOOD LUMBER EXPORTS TO UNITED STATES

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Forestry. As the Minister is aware there was a great deal of fanfare in the U.S. Senate about Canadian softwood lumber exports last week. Thanks to the efforts of our forest industry and workers, the arguments on subsidy and stumpage seem to be waning. However, the determination on quotas and reducing Canadian penetration of the U.S. market is rising dangerously. Does the Minister feel that the talks presently being held between the Canadian and U.S. Governments are moving toward an acceptable conclusion on lumber?

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry)): Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we share the concern of all Hon. Members in this House and the industry in general about the protectionist sentiments that are so rampant in the United States. We have worked very closely with industry, very closely with the provinces, in terms of dealing with the sectors there that would normally be supportive of Canadian interests, and with their own Congressmen to make sure our story is told. We will continue to do that. In fact there are presently ongoing negotiations with the interests in the States. They have visited our sites here. We feel, and of course this is concurred in by the ITC, that there are no undue subsidies at all given by the Canadian Government or any Government.

UNITED STATES SENATOR'S LETTER

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, we know there have been a lot of bold threats and blackmail regarding the lumber issue, but I would like to ask the Minister what he thinks Senator McClure meant when he wrote to me last week and said:

Talks between your government and mine on this issue do not appear to be moving toward any acceptable conclusion.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, it is reasonable to assume that some of those people, the Congressmen who have forest products industries in their own ridings and who are up for re-election, would undertake to protect them against what they perceive to be injustices. Naturally, they are entitled to their own opinion. It