

S.O. 21

Canada does about 75 per cent of its trade with the United States. The United States have more commercial exchanges with Ontario than with Japan, their second trading partner.

Unlike what the Opposition likes to think, the U.S. market is a source of employment for Canadian men and women, and we intend to keep those jobs in Canada and in Abitibi.

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**CRITICISM OF MINISTER**

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, regretably Canada's Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) had to cry from the rooftops that he and Jim Bradley disagreed on the U.S. cleanup plan for the Niagara River. What was wrong in adopting the stronger standards proposed by Ontario? Why did Canada's Environment Minister have to reveal to the Americans, on the eve of negotiations in Washington, that he was in favour of a weaker plan than the one his Ontario colleague proposes?

If details of negotiations are not public knowledge with free trade then why should it be so with the environment?

Incompetence as a negotiator is not all. The Minister's decision to accept the weaker proposal advanced by EPA, despite the urging of the NGOs and his Ontario colleague, reveals that he has no idea of what the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement is all about. The U.S. has a responsibility to Canada because of the agreement which entitles Canada to a cleanup in the Niagara as a matter of international agreement, not as an act of kindness.

* * *

DISASTERS**NEW BRUNSWICK FORESTS—TRIBUTE TO VOLUNTARY FIRE-FIGHTERS**

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): This past weekend thousands of people throughout New Brunswick and the Atlantic region reacted to a series of very serious and risky situations in the most heroic and admirable way. They acted to save homes, property, and perhaps even lives.

● (1410)

Throughout New Brunswick and the Atlantic provinces over the holiday weekend, literally thousands of volunteer fire-fighters made tremendous and tireless efforts to cut the progress of many raging fires and to bring flames that seemed unextinguishable under control. Today a major portion of the damage is behind us, although the situation remains critical. This success is due in large part to volunteer efforts. Without

the brave and selfless efforts of these men, it is certain there would have been much greater loss of homes and real property.

I saw many of these men at work with their hoses, axes, and heavy machines. Long after they were exhausted by the physical demands, and when lesser men would have quit, they struggled to contain the fires and the smoke.

I have now come to realize first hand how reliant a community facing fire fears is on those who act on its behalf. In many areas the only thing standing between a community and disaster was and continues to be the tremendous efforts of fire-fighters.

I think many of us in this Chamber would be humbled by the noble actions of the volunteer fire-fighters in New Brunswick and the Atlantic region.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Sixty seconds.

* * *

SOCIAL AFFAIRS**GROWTH IN NUMBERS DEPENDENT ON FOOD BANKS**

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, last week Bishop Remi De Roo and a number of other representatives of churches who were meeting at a conference in Calgary took note of the very large increase in the number of people in Calgary who are now depending on food banks. They took note of the fact that this is happening in all parts of Canada and expressed a belief that it is morally wrong that people should have to depend on charity for food. They called on the federal and provincial Governments to re-evaluate the delivery of welfare to Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY**GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE**

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal Government, employment in Quebec went down and unemployment went up. However, as a result of the favourable economic conditions we have created in Quebec, 127,000 jobs have been created. A drop of almost 4 per cent in interest rates since September 1984 has encouraged small business. Since the beginning of 1986, more than a third of small business owners have decided to increase their investments, something unheard of under the previous Liberal Government.

Mr. Speaker, that is why permanent jobs are now becoming available for more Canadian men and women. This contrasts favourably with the unsuccessful Canada Works programs developed by the former Government. As we promised in 1984,