

Oral Questions

to New Brunswick to attend the opening of a paper mill which will create some 160 jobs.

This time, the workers did not throw their hard hats at him because they are proud of this project which was launched and implemented by the previous Liberal Government.

Following the speech of the Prime Minister, today's newspapers had the headline: "The Maritimes must fend for themselves". This is what the Prime Minister said.

This confirms what we already knew, namely that the Conservative Government has no regional development policy. The Conservative Government is simply abandoning the Atlantic region.

The Prime Minister has confirmed the comments made by his Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) to the effect that the people of the Atlantic region cannot have the same aspirations as other Canadians. They are to be compared with people in the third world, not in to the rest of Canada. Such an attitude by the Prime Minister and his Minister of Transport is not good enough.

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● (1115)

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSED PENSION CHANGES—EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES
IN NORTH

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, many northern public servants have fears over possible changes to the Public Service Superannuation Act which might mandate a locking in of contributions after two years—instead of the present ten year plus age 45 provision—similar to the rules for private pensions plans laid out in Bill C-90 passed last session.

While these proposed changes might be popular in the South, not too many northerners contemplate a lifetime career in the Public Service. Rather, they plan to work for five or ten years, then withdraw their superannuation contributions as a lump sum to buy a house or use for some other purpose. If a two-year lock-in is legislated, many intend to quit rather than lose the opportunity for a lump sum withdrawal.

Therefore, if changes are made to the Public Service Superannuation Act lock-in, opting-out provisions ought to be incorporated, at least for current employees who have made their life plans under the old rules.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

UNITED STATES DUTY ON CANADIAN SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I suppose my first question, after looking at the benches opposite, should be whether someone has declared a new government holiday.

Mr. Waddell: They're all in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Axworthy: Instead, I would like to direct my first question to the Minister of International Trade. It is a very simple question. How can anyone believe the Government? Last spring the Government went along with President Reagan's sell-out to the U.S. Senators on the lumber issue. Only three weeks ago we compromised our position by trying to plea bargain our case on the trade issue before a U.S. judge. Now the Government says it will fight to the very last step.

How can we have any trust that the Government will not cave in again, that there is not some kind of sweetheart deal in the making with the U.S. administration on the U.S. lumber duty?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I will first advise the House that the Prime Minister is in New Brunswick where he is having a very successful tour.

In answer to the Hon. Member's question as to who believes the Government, I will list just some of those who believe the Government on the stand it has taken. The Hon. Pierre MacDonald, Liberal Minister of Resources of Quebec, Mr. McCambly of the Canadian Federation of Labour, Jack Munro of the IWA, Premier Vander Zalm of the B. C. Social Credit Government, Premier Hatfield, the Conservative Premier of New Brunswick, and Mike Apsey who represents the industry. All agree with our position. All of the parties affected in this dispute support the position of the Government of Canada. I am ashamed of the fact that the Liberal Opposition does not.

● (1120)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy: What I should make clear to the Minister is that the Liberal Opposition stands for standing up for Canada and not caving in as you have been doing.

CONTINUATION OF CANADA—UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister said that the reason for continuing the free trade talks is to "change the rules in order to stop harassment by U.S. interest groups". How can she make that statement when she knows full well that President Reagan, in his April 24 letter to Senator Packwood, said that