

Inquiries of the Ministry

ering the possibility of increasing the price of gold in Canada? In fact, a spokesman for the Group of Ten has advocated the revaluation of the gold standard, which would, I think, greatly spur the economy. Is the minister now studying this solution?

Mr. Pepin: I read in newspapers that very important meetings were being held within the framework of certain international programs. I think the Minister of Finance, on his return, will want to report on these meetings.

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[English]

INDUSTRY**PULP AND PAPER AND AUTOMOBILES—EXPEDITING OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION PROGRAMS TO CREATE JOBS THIS WINTER**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the substantial lay-offs in the pulp and paper industry across the country and the lay-offs in the automotive industry, generally contributing to the over-all critical unemployment situation, does the government propose to revise its policies under regional economic expansion and use these programs in an expedited way to create jobs this winter? Has this matter been discussed or will it be discussed with the provincial premiers?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this matter has received attention from the federal government and we believe that not only one of the objects but one of the effects of the department is the creation of more jobs in that type of region in Canada. If in our discussions with the provinces they can suggest a more effective way of using these programs we will certainly be glad to discuss them, but we will not wait for this conference to take place to improve our methods if we find ways to improve them.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, in view of the lay-offs at Domtar, the anticipated lay-offs at Bowaters and the lay-offs in the automotive industry, what immediate steps does the government propose to take to alleviate this critical situation?

Mr. Trudeau: There is a measure before the House that has reached the third reading stage which is one of the very effective measures we hope to take to counteract some of the reasons for these lay-offs.

PULP AND PAPER—REASON FOR DOMTAR LAY-OFFS

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister which is prompted by his last remark when he referred to the reasons for these lay-offs. I should like to ask what action he proposes to take or what priority is to be given, considering that the Domtar officials have not pointed a finger at the actions of the United States government but have singled out the action of this government as the reason for these lay-offs?

[Mr. Caouette.]

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if I am correctly informed, one of the reasons they have pointed out was the fact that the Canadian dollar was floating and that the rate of exchange went up. The House knows as well as I why this action was taken a year and a half ago to float the dollar. I think the House realizes also that had we not done that we would now be in a much less tenable position vis-à-vis the United States to hold the discussions we are carrying on with them at this time.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, what priority is the government going to give Canadian industries' complaints that actions by the government have had detrimental effects throughout the nation?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member would have to tell us what actions he has reference to. I am sure there have been a host of accusations from the other side and I should like to answer his question as precisely as possible.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. MacInnis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We will be running short of time very soon, but the hon. member has the right to rise on a point of order.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with regard to the remarks of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the last remark of the Prime Minister. The House does not permit members of the treasury benches to ask questions of backbenchers.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I recognize the hon. member for Skeena.

Mr. MacInnis: I will see you outside and you can give me the answers.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**UNEMPLOYMENT—SUGGESTED EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF MUNICIPAL WINTER WORKS PROGRAM**

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. In view of the fact that the municipal winter works program was most valuable and helpful in the past to municipalities, and knowing of the need of municipalities, especially the smaller ones, to make plans beforehand in respect of such projects, is he prepared to make an announcement as early as possible, certainly prior to the expected December 6 federal-provincial meeting, about a municipal winter works program in order that the provinces and municipalities which may want to take advantage of it can do so before winter sets in?

• (3:10 p.m.)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, any announcement which would be on a subject within federal jurisdiction and which we decided to make would be made well in advance of the federal-provincial conference. I believe the purpose of the conference is to discuss methods under joint jurisdiction or methods by which in