

jeopardized, and I agree with the comments made by my cabinet colleague.

FUNDING CUT-BACKS—EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology, but first I would like to congratulate him on his appointment. In view of the statement just made by the President of the Treasury Board that there will be no loss of jobs in research and development, could the Minister explain why, in fact, cuts of between \$36 million and \$70 million are being imposed on the National Research Council, and why lay-off notices have gone to dozens of scientists of great experience at the NRC? Could the Minister also explain explicitly how it is that the Government of Canada is abandoning its capacity to recognize dioxin and other hazardous substances through the disbandment of the environmental secretariat?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the Hon. Member is that, indeed, no lay-off notices have been issued to any employees of the National Research Council. We are taking every measure to ensure a stimulation of private sector research and development—

Mr. Deans: Oh, yes, Sir!

Mr. Siddon:—consistent with the commitment of this Government. If that, in fact, means that people who were formerly employed in some of these laboratories are going to be able to seek out new private sector initiatives with the benefit of programs which this Government will be announcing, then it will give them a permanent, rewarding, exciting, and challenging alternative to stagnating in laboratories—

Mr. Deans: And have it done in the States, or perhaps Europe?

Mr. Siddon:—which have outlived their usefulness in some cases.

CONSULTATION INQUIRY

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that employees in several of the laboratories concerned were told on Friday that lay-offs were coming, and were told how many lay-offs would come, but were not told who would be laid off, how can the Minister make that kind of statement? Why did the Government go forward with the cuts in the NRC without the kind of consultation which was so amply promised in the document called *An Agenda for Economic Renewal*, which we received only last week?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I repeat there have been no lay-offs, and the decisions which were announced by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, on Thursday night, were discussed

fully with the senior officials at the National Research Council. It is unfortunate that one does not discuss such contemplated measures with every employee. However, indeed and in fact, those positions were seen to be the least essential of all of the activities of the National Research Council and, therefore, this Government took an essential decision, with which the Hon. Member obviously disagrees.

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● (1440)

WHALING

IMPORTANCE TO INUIT OF BAFFIN ISLAND AND EASTERN ARCTIC

Mr. Thomas Suluk (Nunatsiak): Mr. Speaker, the seal industry in 50 per cent of my riding has been destroyed by conservationists such as Greenpeace. Due to the lack of industry and business opportunities in Nunatsiak, over 50 per cent of the residents still carry on a form of renewable resource harvesting to supplement their meagre income. In the absence of a substantial amount of financial assistance to the Eastern Arctic, a ban on Narwhal hunting would aggravate the situation and the consequences would be devastating.

My question to the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs consequently is: In view of the importance of renewable resource harvesting of Narwhals and Beluga whales to Inuit of Baffin Island and the Eastern Arctic, could the Minister assure northerners that the Government will protect their interests and that appropriate representation will be forwarded to the convention on international trade in endangered species to be held next year?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): May I first congratulate the Hon. Member on his election and for his first question in the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): The Government is aware of proposals made by the Federal Republic of Germany to list Narwhals and Beluga whales in a way which would jeopardize the economy of northern Canada. We have already begun attempts to persuade the Government of West Germany not to proceed in that way and consequently to be in a position to help us protect the industry and people's livelihood in northern Canada. We are also in close contact with other countries which share our view, to enlist their help in trying to protect the economy and the livelihood of northern Canadians.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

PLIGHT OF NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERMEN NOT ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employ-