

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, February 21, 1972

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NATIONAL CAPITAL

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGREEMENT FOR ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN LANDS OF E. B. EDDY COMPANY

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wish to make an important announcement that will be of interest to all members of this House, to residents of the National Capital Region and to visitors to this capital. For many years there have been recurring appeals to successive governments, from all sides of the House, to do something about the Eddy pulp and paper mill across the Ottawa River. These appeals have been based partly on a common desire to reduce air and water pollution and to develop a more scenic central area. They stem also from the fact that this industrial complex, which lies so close to Parliament Hill, constitutes a critical barrier between the cities of Ottawa and Hull.

I am glad, Mr. Speaker, to announce an agreement with the E. B. Eddy Company that will provide for the transfer of a substantial amount of Eddy land in Quebec to the National Capital Commission, and will involve the removal of some of the more unsightly parts of the Eddy complex, and the elimination of most of the pollution emanating from it. All of this will be accomplished within a framework of a commitment by the company that no one will be laid off as a consequence of the transaction.

The essential elements of the agreement are that the company will transfer roughly 44 acres of land to the National Capital Commission, including most of the waterfront land on the north bank of the river across from Parliament Hill, and close down the Eddy sulphite and groundwood mills and newsprint machine, which will take place over the next few weeks.

Approximately 450 of the company's 2,500 employees will be affected by this closing. As an integral and essential part of the arrangements, the company has undertaken to continue to provide employment in the remaining part of their operations for all displaced employees. For employees who because of age, physical handicap or other reasons decide against accepting other work with the company, generous early retirement and severance pay arrangements are being provided in the agreement. All these arrangements respecting the employees have been worked out in close consultation between the company, its unions, and the National Capital Commission. They have been endorsed by the unions involved, the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill

Workers, the United Papermakers and Paperworkers, and the International Association of Machinists.

In exchange for the transfer of land, and the commitments by the company, National Capital Commission will pay the company \$29,500,000.

The Eddy Company estimates that the closing of the pulp and newsprint operations will reduce the water pollution from the plant by close to 90 per cent and the air pollution by 100 per cent. Furthermore, the company's decision to buy its pulp rather than to make it is expected to lead to the ending of the log drive on the Ottawa River between Arnprior and the mouth of the Gatineau River, removing an additional source of pollution in the river.

The transaction being completed today is really the first stage of a ten-year plan to move the whole Eddy complex from its present riverbank location to a new site in the environs of Hull. The company has declared to us its firm intention to undertake such relocation, and it is now actively seeking land on which to construct new facilities. This will make possible the carrying out of future moves in such a manner as to minimize the impact on employment and on business operations. Important elements of the agreement are that the government is given the right of first refusal on all the remaining Eddy property, including the island between Hull and Ottawa, and that no expansion on the present site will be undertaken. The company has committed itself to work with the government to ensure that future phases of the move are carried out in the same manner and with the same co-operative spirit that has made the present agreement possible.

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In recent years it has become increasingly clear that the Eddy complex is a serious obstacle to the planning of the national capital, walling off physically and visually the new government buildings now being constructed and proposed for Hull. This property, along with other nearby lands such as LeBreton Flats, are essential elements in the development of a national capital core area which links language groups, cultures, provinces and sister cities. The buildings, homes, parks, recreational facilities and other amenities that will occupy these lands on both sides of the river will greatly improve the appearance, the planning, the functioning and the economic base of the national capital region.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to pay tribute to my two predecessors who have worked on these arrangements, the present Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) and the present Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andras), and to express a particular word of appreciation to Mr. Fullerton, Chairman of the National Capital Commission, and his staff.

I am also very grateful to the leaders of the Eddy unions who have played such an important part in the achieve-