

released today and in view of the continuing, nauseating increasing unemployment figures on Cape Breton Island and eastern Nova Scotia, where at the moment it reaches 30 per cent—those are not my figures; they come from academics, clergymen, chambers of commerce and labour—what steps is the minister and his government taking at the moment, and what steps have been taken with the premier of Nova Scotia or the President of Sydney Steel Corporation, to provide the necessary funds to modernize and rejuvenate the Sydney steel mill? That would create more jobs.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, during the last few years my department and DEVCO in particular have invested each year an average of \$40 million in Cape Breton to support and develop existing businesses and create new ones. That is what we have done. We are now considering a subsidy application from SYSCO for a plant upgrading program and we hope that a decision will soon be taken in that regard.

[*English*]

**Mr. Muir:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman seems to be a bit confused. I asked a question about SYSCO, not DEVCO. I asked about the Sydney Steel Corporation. In view of the fact that the minister and other ministers sitting over there have told me in the past that moneys would be made available for modernization and rejuvenation of the Sydney Steel plant and that they have also made statements outside the House—and I should warn the minister and the government that if something is not done on Cape Breton Island we will have severe unrest this winter—for God's sake what is the minister, the Prime Minister and this government going to do?

**Mr. Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, obviously the hon. gentleman missed the latter part of my answer. We have received an application from SYSCO—

**Mr. Muir:** I know that.

**Mr. Lessard:**—with regard to a proposal to modernize the existing facilities. This is being considered, and a decision should be arrived at very soon. However, that is only part of our activities in support of the economy of Cape Breton Island. The hon. gentleman knows very well that we have been very active in trying to bring industries and all kinds of development to Cape Breton Island over the last few years.

**Mr. Muir:** Mr. Speaker, since we have been assured that money is going to be provided to rejuvenate the Sydney Steel plant, and the minister says soon, is it going to be next month or the month after, or do we have to wait until there is a provincial election or a federal election and let these poor people be used as pawns in an election?

**Mr. Lessard:** Mr. Speaker, election or not, every year we have been spending money through DEVCO and other agencies in Cape Breton, in Nova Scotia and in the maritimes, and we will carry on doing so for the purpose of meeting the needs of these people.

### *Oral Questions*

[*Translation*]

#### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

INQUIRY WHETHER FORCE MADE ILLEGAL RAIDS BEFORE 1973

**Mr. René Matte (Champlain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General.

In view of the revelations made with regard to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police activities in 1973, which actions were revealed by the minister himself, can the minister tell the House whether or not he has checked to see if similar activities took place prior to 1973, and more specifically during and before the October 1970 crisis?

**Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, naturally, following my statement to the House in June of last year, we examined our files in an effort to determine whether or not the RCMP might possibly have committed other illegalities. As a result of that decision, Mr. Speaker, we decided to refer the whole matter to a royal commission of inquiry set up by the federal government whose terms of reference include the study of all practices and procedures, and the calling in of witnesses and taking of their depositions under oath to determine whether or not there may indeed have been other illegal activities. Mr. Speaker, I feel that that is now the responsibility of the commission. In any event, even if I were to say yes or no to the hon. member in this House, he would not be satisfied with my answer. To some extent that is why, Mr. Speaker, we ourselves set up a royal commission of inquiry in order that this type of activity might be completely brought to light.

**Mr. Matte:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. I would ask the minister to be more specific since this is a very serious issue. Has he obtained, in respect of events of 1970, the same kind of information he has had about those of 1973? This is a very specific question.

**Mr. Fox:** The question is extremely specific, Mr. Speaker. If my understanding of it is correct, it asked whether there were before 1970 indications of the type referred to in connection with the 1972-73 period. The answer is extremely clear, extremely specific. I have had no indication whatever of that type of activity in the period referred to by the hon. member.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

#### TRANSPORT

ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY—SUGGESTED MODERATION OF PROPOSED INCREASE IN TOLLS

**Mr. Paul E. McRae (Fort William):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transport. Given the serious divergence of opinion as between the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and the many well informed users of the seaway from Sept Iles to Thunder Bay, who believe that the near doubling of the tolls will create disastrous results, possibly some diversion of iron ore from Sept Iles to Philadelphia and