

[Translation]

INDUSTRY

ST. LOUIS KNITTING MILLS—MEETING BETWEEN COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES AND DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL—REPORT TO MINISTER

Mr. André Fortin (Lothbinière): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Could he tell us whether, following my many previous requests made in private, he sent one of his officials to hold discussions with the management of St. Louis Knitting Mills in Princeville, which employ 75 persons, and if so whether he received a report from that official?

Mr. Speaker: I really feel such a question should not be put at this time. Normally it seems to me—and I suggest that respectfully to the hon. member—that such a question should be placed on the order paper. At any rate, the question having been put, the hon. minister might wish to give a brief reply.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the information received resulted from a personal visit or a telephone conversation, but I did get a report on the company involved.

I can assure the hon. member of my department's keen concern with this matter. In fact, if I remember well, we are sending the president of the company on a study tour of U.S. markets.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SEPARATION OF EAST PAKISTAN—POSITION OF CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Could he tell us if the Canadian government supports or would be ready to support the separation of East Pakistan from the Republic of Pakistan?

Mr. Speaker: I still doubt very much that such a question is acceptable. However, if the minister wants to reply briefly to it, I do not see any objection.

[English]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it quite clear that the government of Canada is not supporting any movement for the separation of East Pakistan from Pakistan.

[Later:]

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): I have a supplementary question to one asked a moment or two ago with regard to the comments of the Secretary of State for External Affairs in the House yesterday about the position of East Pakistan. In light of the minister's remarks a few moments ago, is he in effect withdrawing the remarks he made yesterday afternoon, and has he had any communication from the government of East Pakistan with reference to his remarks in the House?

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday my remarks were apparently misconstrued and it was for this reason I wanted to make it quite plain today on my own initiative that I had no intention of supporting separation in saying as I did yesterday that I supported the restoration of democratic government under civilian rule in East Pakistan and preferably on the basis of those who had been elected in the last election.

EAST PAKISTAN—INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES OF GENOCIDE BY CANADIAN OBSERVERS

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, has the government of Canada requested permission from the government of Pakistan to send observers into East Pakistan to determine whether or not the charges of genocide, against the Hindus especially, have any foundation in fact?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a complaint has been made to the Secretary General of the United Nations that genocide was involved, and the Secretary General has not considered it necessary to have inquiries made. I should think it would be incumbent upon the Secretary General, if he felt there was justification, to have such an inquiry made.

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LABOUR RELATIONS

DISPUTE BETWEEN HUDSON BAY MINING AND SMELTING COMPANY AND EMPLOYEES—ANNOUNCEMENT OF AGREEMENT

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Has he anything to report in regard to the meetings currently taking place in Winnipeg between labour and management in relation to the very lengthy work stoppage at the operations of Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company at Flin Flon and Snow Lake in northern Manitoba?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, as well as the hon. member for Mackenzie, has taken a very active interest in this particular labour dispute. Shortly before coming into the House I was notified by the federal mediators, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Gunn, that an agreement has been reached and that later today a memorandum of agreement will be signed by both parties.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Simpson: Mr. Speaker, has the minister had any indication yet when operations at the two plants will recommence?

Mr. Mackasey: I cannot say definitely, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the strike has been going on for four months now and the harm that has been done to that particular community, I would urge both parties to resume work as soon as possible, preferably as soon as Monday.