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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

ORAL QUESTIONS - Forestry Industry

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government has abandoned thousands of families that are suffering because of growing job losses in the forestry sector. The industry was virtually ignored in the budget, and it is clear it has been written off by the government.

Its silence is stunning when it comes to the \$860 million in direct subsidies being given to the U.S. pulp and paper industry. Why is it missing in action when it should be standing up for our forestry workers?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, in fact this government has acted very quickly. We have also acted very convincingly in how we are supporting the forestry industry.

I thank the member for the question, though, on this specific point, because I think it is important to discuss it in a clean manner. The subsidy to which the member is referring is one we are taking very seriously. In fact I have written to the secretary of energy, Mr. Chu, on the issue.

It is something that does cause us concern domestically in terms of our competitiveness, and we are taking a look at all the options available.

I offer my ability to speak with the member to keep him updated on the matter.