

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXTENDED LAY-OFFS—MOTION UNDER
S.O. 43

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Madam Speaker, the CNR announced on Monday that it will be extending its previously announced summer lay-off to a total of ten weeks in addition to the usual summer shutdown. This should make the Progressive Conservative Party very happy. For years they have been advocating that Crown corporations like the CNR act like any other short-sighted, profit-blinded enterprise. They have succeeded only too well—and too easily, I might add—in persuading their Liberal comrades. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy):

That the Minister of Transport, and the new president of the CNR who, incidentally, made no mention at the plan to extend the lay-offs in his so-called honest and open presentation to the transport committee last week, be awarded the Progressive Conservative Callous Businessman of the Year Award for their strict adherence to the Progressive Conservative view of how Crown corporations should act.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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[Translation]

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

EVENTUAL COALITION WITH PARTI QUÉBÉCOIS—MOTION
UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Henri Tousignant (Témiscamingue): Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity, under the provisions of Standing Order 43.

Whereas after a meeting of the Parti Québécois National Executive last weekend, the leader of the party, after ambiguous and controversial discussions on the party's future on the federal scene, stated that he was considering a possible coalition with the Progressive Conservative Party, I move, seconded by the member for Beauce (Mr. Lapointe):

That the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party inform the House how he sees a possible alliance with a party that is in favour of independence, and that he clarify his position for us as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker: Under the provisions of Standing Order 43, this kind of motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Oral Questions

• (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

FINANCE

QUERY RESPECTING DRAFT INCOME TAX LEGISLATION

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Since the minister has met with his caucus all morning—I do not see any major bruises on his face—and has given his caucus some understanding of the status of the various announcements he is going to make, would the minister announce to the House today when he proposes to make his economic and financial statement, when he proposes to release draft legislation respecting the income tax measures of the budget, and when he proposes to give to the House some new estimate as to the size of the burgeoning budget deficit?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I want to tell the hon. member that, although we in the Liberal caucus have disagreements, we treat each other with respect. That might be an attitude which could be developed in the Conservative caucus.

I have already said in reply to the Leader of the Opposition that I would update the financial and economic situation in the House of Commons before the summer recess. I have not established a firm date, but if the expectation is that the House is to close at about the end of June, it will be within that period.

The same answer applies to the question with respect to draft Income Tax Act legislation. In reply to a question asked by an hon. member from Vancouver I indicated that that would be tabled in the House before the summer recess.

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THE ECONOMY

EXCHANGE VALUE OF DOLLAR

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, surely the minister understands that every day of delay leads to record lows in the level of the Canadian dollar. Today it is trading at below 78 cents American. Every drop in the value of the Canadian dollar leads to increases in interest rates in the country. Surely the minister understands this. Does he not realize that every time the level of the dollar reaches a record low, his credibility also reaches a record low? Will the minister give us a more precise understanding of when these announcements will be made so that people can plan and understand what they are dealing with?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member is again exhibiting considerable naivete when he relates exchange movements of the Canadian currency to a