

can goods coming into Canada has increased by four times in the last year.

What is the minister to do to protect the manufacturers of this country and the linguistic duality of our nation?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, there are 3,000 Customs officers at the border performing this function of enforcing Canadian laws, as well as the inspectors.

Basically we have a law that is proper and we enforce it to the best of our ability, much the same as the police enforce speeding laws. We cannot guarantee that every single product will be properly labelled without putting in a huge number of inspectors at huge costs and putting a huge bureaucratic burden upon the very manufacturers about whose prospects he is concerned.

• (1500)

I am sure the hon. member would not want me to go out and hire the thousands and thousands of label cops necessary to ensure that every single product at all times is properly labelled. We do an excellent job and Canadian manufacturers have their interests fully protected.

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[Translation]

TOURISM

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism), my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Does the minister responsible for tourism realize that current economic pessimism, combined with unprecedented tax increases and disastrous interest rates, threatens the survival of many small businesses and tourism? In the circumstances, could the minister explain why he cut the budget for tourism marketing at a time when we need it more than ever?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, let me say that both he and I and the hon. member would love to have more money to invite and advertise to the entire

world the tremendous beauty of this country and the fact that they are missing a great experience if they do not come here as tourists.

What we are doing, given the limitation of a significant deficit and the fact that the taxpayers are already burdened, is spending smarter. We will see tourism continue to grow in this country as a result of the initiatives of my colleague.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Regina—Lumsden, a single question.

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TRANSPORT

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden): Mr. Speaker, I would rather you had called Orders of the Day but I will take the question.

Mr. Speaker: I must say to the hon. member that it is very tempting. Perhaps a short question.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I only get one once every two or three months, now I have five of them.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. The National Transportation Agency has served notice of its intention to remove regulations over passenger rail service in this country. This includes rescinding the declaration that VIA Rail services are passenger train services, and allowing VIA Rail to make its own decisions on routing and frequency of routes even though the royal commission appointed by the minister has not had a chance to give an interim report.

Will the minister request the National Transportation Agency not to proceed with this until the royal commission has issued an interim report and will he ensure that the eight protected routes are kept in place regardless of what the National Transportation Agency does?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think with the experience my friend has, he knows very well that the agency has decided itself to take this initiative. It is not coming from the Department of Transport.

I think it is a fair concern when he raises the question of VIA Rail services, remote services and the royal commission. Obviously we will consider the process used by the National Transportation Agency. The government will consider the proposals but he knows very well that it is the agency's own initiative and the Department of