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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the situation in Lebanon I am pleased that the Minister of Employment and Immigration has accepted a number of recommendations proposed by the immigration committee.

Yet, by refusing to accept that a special designated class be created to assist the Lebanese with resettlement, the Minister of Employment and Immigration sent a clear signal that the government is not seriously prepared to extend a hand of welcome to those afflicted by strife. Her outright rejection will certainly further the 80 per cent rejection rate of Lebanese trying to escape the hardships of civil war.

Clearly, by accepting only Lebanese with family members in Canada, the signal the minister and her government is sending out is that those Lebanese without family members need not apply. The minister's mixed response to the report and her rejection of the special designated class is truly perplexing since, after all, it was the high refusal rate of Lebanese citizens to Canada which initially triggered the standing committee's report.

In light of her actions I urge the minister and the government not to reject categorically the option of creating a special designated class, should the fighting resume and intensify and should the accepted changes not ameliorate the situation in Lebanon significantly.

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NORTHERN TAX ALLOWANCE

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, northern and isolated Canadians could soon be gouged and screwed twice over, not only by the upcoming goods and services tax but also by the savage cuts to their northern tax benefits. The task force on these benefits has recently recommended that the Minister of Finance simplify the northern and isolated benefit system. The task force has drawn the northern line across this country in such a way that 83 per cent of all communities now receiving benefits will lose them.

On behalf of these communities and the caucus of northern New Democratic members of Parliament, I say that this is completely unacceptable. We do not need a so-called simple benefits system. We need a fair system

that takes into account the extremes of isolation and climate in Canada.

New Democrats have initiated a petition campaign against this unfair government tax grab. Canadians from northern B.C., Alberta, northern Ontario and elsewhere who do not have a New Democratic Party MP can call or write any of our offices to receive this petition and to fight this government tax grab.

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ECONOMIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Agriculture for the effort they put into the signing of the recent ERDAs in my province. Both agreements total approximately \$50 million.

I know that I speak on behalf of the minister of fisheries and the minister responsible for agriculture in the province of New Brunswick as well as the Premier.

These are very important agreements for the province of New Brunswick, so I do thank the federal government, the Minister of Agriculture, and our federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for expediting these very important agreements.

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TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, Friday is the tenth anniversary of the great train derailment in Mississauga in which 250,000 residents were evacuated from their homes.

CP Train 54 was carting a shipment of toxic chemicals and the accident had the potential of becoming one of the most devastating man-made disasters in history. Ten years later a similar accident could still occur.

According to the union representing railway car men and train safety inspectors, CP and CN railways have laid off more than 2,000 safety inspectors since the 1979 derailment. When this government made the decision to deregulate the Canadian transportation industry, it accepted a responsibility to increase the emphasis on monitoring safety standards.