

*Oral Questions*

initiatives and the actions that have taken place to date in regard to the establishment of the Prairie Rail Authority, can I ask the minister if he intends to meet with the western ministers of transportation in the very near future to ensure that the progress is stepped up? Can he assure the House that this very important element of the Hall Commission will in fact be implemented?

**Mr. Lang:** Mr. Speaker, it should be borne in mind that the Hall Commission recommendation of the Prairie Rail Authority was an interim measure. That authority, according to his recommendation, was to disappear from existence by 1990. There are some among the producers organizations in the west who believe that a quicker and clearer resolution of the future of the rail lines involved is actually advantageous. I have been meeting with those producer groups and I must say that I have been receiving from them practically total support for the exact course of action we have been following. Whether I will meet with provincial ministers may depend upon the rather exciting exchange of correspondence which is going on, but it is significant that while the producer groups are saying essentially that we should proceed in the way we are doing, the only ones who think differently are not only the provincial ministers of transport but serious political opponents.

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● (1152)

**INDUSTRY****NORTHERN TELECOM—REASON FOR LAY-OFFS IN VIEW OF PROMISE MADE**

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. On September 30 I wrote to the minister asking for an investigation into the fact that Northern Telecom, a subsidiary of Bell Canada, will have laid off 1,000 workers by the end of the year despite a promise to the government that, in return for \$140 million loan to Turkey by the Export Development Corporation to purchase telephone equipment, Northern Telecom would create 860 man years annually for the next five years. Can the minister explain why Northern Telecom is laying off workers instead of creating jobs with this government's assistance?

**Hon. Jack H. Horner (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, may I take this question as notice. I am not up on the Northern Telecom matter.

**Mr. Symes:** I would like the minister, in his reply at a later date, to also answer the following: In view of the fact that the federal government over the past few years has given Northern Telecom over \$1 million in duty remissions, \$10 million in grants and \$44 million in deferred taxes, why are there no guarantees demanded by the government that in return for this largesse the company be obliged to create jobs rather than lay off workers?

**Mr. Horner:** I will look into that, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****NEGOTIATION OF NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT—REQUEST FOR REPORT**

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the importance to Canada of uranium mining in terms of jobs, exports and trade, can the minister say if he has been able to negotiate a nuclear safeguards agreement with the European Economic Community and Japan so that shipments of Canadian uranium which have been curtailed since the start of this year can be resumed?

**Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, since I discussed this matter in the House prior to adjournment there has been a succession of meetings, the most recent having taken place last week. Progress is being made but so far we have not reached the point where we could resume shipments. I am hopeful that the parties concerned, the customer countries, will be agreeable to meeting the conditions which Canada requires and we are working towards that objective. I hope it can be resolved. I am aiming for some time before the end of the present year.

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**FINANCE****SMALL BUSINESS, FARM AND FISHERIES LOANS—REASON FOR FAILURE OF BANKS TO PROVIDE FUNDS**

**Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. During the last session of parliament this House passed amendments to the Farm Improvement Loans Act, the Small Businesses Loans Act and the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act and we were told at that time by the minister's predecessor that discussions would be held with the banks so that loans could be made by the banks under these acts. I am advised that practically no banks are offering loans to their customers under these acts, and I wonder if any discussions were carried out and whether or not these loans would be made available very soon. This is especially important because of the economic conditions in the country today.

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I will look into the matter right away. I have not been informed that there is any problem there, but I will make sure that the law is applied and that the loans are made available by the banks.

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**HOUSING****REASON FOR FAILURE TO PROTECT HOME BUYER**

**Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. Because of the indecent haste of the former minister in that