

Oral Questions

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Member's question and his concern. If any of those 1,700 farm families are clients of the FCC and under the jurisdiction of this Government, they need not fear eviction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wise: As the Hon. Member will know, last September I placed a moratorium on farm foreclosures under my jurisdiction and that of the FCC. That moratorium will remain in effect until such time as further measures are brought forward by this Government. I hope that will be in the very, very near future.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

STATUS OF MONCTON REPAIR SHOPS

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport.

[English]

Last December 18 the Minister informed me that he would check whether the CN shops in Moncton were for sale. Can the Minister inform the House today of the status of the Moncton shops? Are they up for sale?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, no, the shops are not for sale. However, I have been advised by CN that Canadian General Electric has indicated an interest in assessing the potential for locomotive manufacture and assembly in Canada. That particular aspect is being investigated during the over-all assessment of CN's maintenance facilities across the country.

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF JOB PROTECTION

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, the workers in Moncton are very, very worried about their jobs. With all the jobs which I have heard today have been created, I do not think too many have been created in New Brunswick. Will the Minister eliminate the uncertainty for the workers in Moncton and assure them that these jobs will be protected? Will he also assure them that the CN situation in Moncton will not develop into something comparable to the Gulf/Ultramar fiasco?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if there is any anxiety and fear being perpetrated in Moncton it is primarily as a result of the inaccuracies of opposition Members who are going around fanning the flames of fear and hysteria. I can assure the Hon. Member that CN is assessing in a very deliberate fashion its maintenance requirements all across the country, in Winnipeg, Moncton, and Montreal. When that assessment is concluded, some time later

this year, and if there are any adjustments to be made, they will be announced in the usual manner.

* * *

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FUNDING

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that vastly increased expenditures for research and development are critical to Canada's industrial and economic future and the standard of living of its people. This includes, of course, university research. The previous Minister of Science and Technology promised a five-year plan for NSERC, and the present Minister indicated that, given some time, he will have a pleasant surprise. No surprises have been forthcoming.

Will the Minister explain why the Government has kept the NSERC five-year plan approval on the back-burner so long that the President of NSERC has had to develop a disaster scenario for university research funding?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity to meet with the Council of Natural Sciences and Engineering who are responsible for channelling public resources to universities for research and development. It was a very useful and productive meeting. I was able to receive advice from the Council and give them the necessary comfort to proceed with their planning in advance of the funding announcement by the Government.

FINANCING OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, I am still unclear, as I am sure the rest of the House is unclear, whether there will be approval of the NSERC five-year plan. Even more important, will the Government at long last produce an over-all strategy for research and development financing? We have waited too long.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, there is going to be a five-year plan. The delay has been partially caused because of the *ad hoc* situation which has been in place for the last five years, and because my predecessor and I are insisting that there be more predictability and stability in the science community so they can proceed with their planning adequately. The Member just has to be a little more patient for a few more days.

* * *

CANADA POST CORPORATION

POLICY CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for