

The Minister says that he does not support the decision, but his failure to act confirms that he does support the decision by CN. Does this decision to put 650 workers out of work reflect this Government's policy on regional development? Is that how this Government intends to treat people in Atlantic Canada, where at this time we feel we are being treated like Third World countries?

[English]

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman knows that I am simply continuing the policy set by the previous administration. There were many thousands—

**Mr. Broadbent:** You are supposed to change it.

**Mr. Riis:** We are supposed to have something different.

**Mr. Crosbie:** There were many thousands of CN employees laid off across the country during 1980 to 1984 at which time the then Government did not intervene, thousands of them in Atlantic Canada. This is a great pity.

If CN has to compete against U.S. railways and other modes of transportation and must make it on its own, that is the way it has to be. I cannot overrule the board of directors and management of CN in business decisions that they had to come to themselves. We will do, and we have done, everything we can to ensure that the workers affected are assisted. It is a pity at the present time there are some impediments in the way, but we are hoping they will be overcome.

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## AGRICULTURE

### GRAIN SALES—REQUEST FOR QUOTA ANNOUNCEMENT

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board. Although we are some two months into the new crop year most prairie farmers have not been given any permission to deliver grain into the new crop year because there have been no quotas. Since quotas generally follow sales commitments, are we still making sales? Why are there no quotas?

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I have to point out to the Hon. Member that yesterday we had extremely good news for Canadian farmers concerning sales. Our best customer saw fit to renew a five-year grain agreement that calls for a minimum of 25 million tonnes of grain over five years.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mayer:** I should also point out that that is the minimum amount. Over the last five years the Soviet Union bought 36

million tonnes. That is certainly good news. The sale is worth somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$1 billion a year, even at today's prices. Hopefully over time prices will improve so it will be a multibillion dollar deal.

I am well aware of the concern which the Hon. Member raises. We have been moving grain and some quotas will be announced very shortly.

### SALES CLEARANCES INQUIRY

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister knows that there are really only two major grain buyers left in the world, Russia and Japan. My question is more specific. What has happened to our sales clearances and our clearances for the first two months of the crop year in comparison to previous years? Generally we have had quotas offered much sooner than this. This is a near record in not being able to deliver grain as far as the farmers are concerned. How are our clearances compared to previous years?

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is a former member of the Wheat Board Advisory Committee and I would have thought he would have had his facts together. The Canadian Wheat Board sold grain last year to something like 60 countries. When he says that we have only two customers, he insults Brazil, Japan, and all of the other customers—

**Mr. Althouse:** I said major customers.

**Mr. Mayer:** —that buy a tremendous amount of grain from us.

We are making sales. As evidence of that, at the end of the crop year last year we went into it with the lowest on-farm carry-over on record. The Canadian Wheat Board has been doing an extremely good job of marketing and with the support of this Government—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Hon. Member for York East (Mr. Redway).

**Mr. Mayer:** —it will continue to do a very good job.

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## ENERGY

### PRICE OF GASOLINE

**Mr. Alan Redway (York East):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The Minister is aware that the price spread between leaded and unleaded gasoline is substantially higher in Canada than it is in the United States. Will the Minister give the House his undertaking that he will ensure that this substantial difference is eliminated?