

*Oral Questions***ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS****WEATHER FORECASTING AND REPORTING SERVICES IN REGINA, SASK.—MEETING WITH PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS**

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, since no government should be blamed for the weather, particularly today's, in addition to all the things they should be blamed for, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of State (Environment).

In view of the fact that one grain crop in Saskatchewan is worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the Canadian economy, that more improved farmland is in Saskatchewan than Manitoba and Alberta combined, and that 40 per cent of occupied farmland is in Saskatchewan, can the minister tell us the results of the meeting between himself or his officials and the government of Saskatchewan regarding their offer to put up \$200,000 in order to maintain full weather forecasting and reporting services in Regina?

**Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)):** Mr. Speaker, the meeting was a very fruitful one. My assistant deputy minister explained to the officials of the government of Saskatchewan that there will be no diminution in the weather forecasting services available to the province of Saskatchewan. The moving of weather forecasters from the Regina office to Winnipeg had been in the planning stages for some time; it was not a recent move. But since the spending cuts came about, the move was speeded up.

● (1442)

Another outcome of that meeting was that the Saskatchewan government offered us \$200,000 in order to keep the Regina office open. We are considering that proposal.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Marchand:** I will take their money.

**An hon. Member:** Saskatchewan has lots of money.

**Mr. Marchand:** Saskatchewan has lots of money, and they would have even more if—

**Mr. Benjamin:** We would, if you guys would leave us alone.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, someone says they are getting snow in Regina. We are getting snowed here. In view of the fact that there are as many square miles in Saskatchewan as there are in either Alberta or Manitoba, and since the minister was able to reverse the decision in the case of Newfoundland when a by-election was on—and there are 100,000 fewer square miles in Newfoundland about which to report the weather—will the minister advise his cabinet colleagues that this decision must be reversed and that full weather forecasting and reporting services in Saskatchewan will have to be

[Mr. Cullen.]

maintained and, in fact, that they need to be enlarged compared with what they used to be?

**Mr. Marchand:** Mr. Speaker, there were two different situations. In respect of Newfoundland, representations on the basis of safety were made to me, not only by my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but by a large number of the public there who felt that if the weather office in Gander was closed, it would endanger the lives of a great many people, especially the fishermen. Professionals involved in weather services said there may be some truth in those representations and that there may be situations where a safety factor would be involved.

However, in the case of Saskatchewan this advice was not given to me. I am absolutely assured that the people in Saskatchewan will get full and complete weather service, just as they had before. As a matter of fact, it is only the forecasters who are being moved from Regina to Winnipeg: we will still maintain at least nine people in the Regina office to give the people of Saskatchewan full weather forecasting services.

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**CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS****COMPETITION FROM PRIVATE OPERATORS IN CN MARINE ACTIVITIES AT NORTH SYDNEY, N.S.**

**Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Transport. I gather that, unfortunately, it is not the Secretary of State for External Affairs, as I was hoping it would be.

My question refers to the activities of CN Marine and CN generally which, by their actions, are drastically reducing the opportunities for employment for stevedores and others at North Sydney, the port from which the shipment of goods destined for Newfoundland is made. I was hoping that the acting minister would be the Secretary of State for External Affairs, since he is from Newfoundland. However, will the acting minister discuss this matter with his colleagues to ascertain whether an inquiry could take place in respect of this drastic cutback in employment and with regard to the government's provision of subsidy through the CTC to private shipping operators competing against the government's Crown corporation for the shipment of goods to Newfoundland?

[Translation]

**Mr. Charles Lapointe (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, whether in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia or any other Atlantic province—I think in this case Newfoundland is the province concerned—we have reviewed and are still reviewing the situation in relation to the CN railways and ferry services, and that is why we have set up the Snavely commission; as for the other provinces we also have received representations, for example from the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi, to review the transport situation in those areas. That question is constantly under