

S. O. 31

Has the Wheat Board made a \$1 billion grain sale? Is it the Soviet Union and/or Brazil that is purchasing our grain?

Well, who is wearing the white whiskers does not matter, Mr. Speaker. What does matter is that farmers on the Prairies, grains handlers in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec, railroaders between the prairie elevators and Thunder Bay, and seafarers throughout the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system will gain from this early Christmas present. So, too, will the elevator operators, the railroad companies, and the ship-owners, as well as municipalities, and federal and provincial governments, as Canadian workers are back on the job.

Yes, Canada, there is a Santa Claus. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is the highly regarded Canadian institution, the Canadian Wheat Board, that has done this job on our behalf. Thank you on behalf of all those who will benefit.

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TRADE

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, the tendency for Canadians who live along the Canada-U.S. border to shop regularly in the U.S. is increasing at an alarming rate.

A recent study has shown that this trend has taken between \$300 million and \$600 million annually out of the Ontario economy during the past three years. Among the many devastating effects of the GST will be a further price differentiation in retail products between Canada and the United States.

• (1410)

For the government merely to say that Canadian retailers must become more competitive is to ignore the many advantages that the U.S. retailer has over his Canadian counterpart. The 4 per cent to 5 per cent spread in interest rates, plus the effects of the pending GST, are only going to encourage further American retailers to target the Canadian shopper. Depressed Christmas sales plus the 7 per cent GST beginning on New Year's Day, will add up to an out of business sign for many small retailers in Canada—

Mr. Speaker: I regret that the hon. member has exceeded his time.

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[Translation]

TRIBUTE TO LOUIS-FRANÇOIS GAGNON

Mr. Barry Moore (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, Louis-François Gagnon is a young man from Mont-Laurier who, as a result of remarkable efforts and strong will, is on the verge of becoming an international celebrity on the downhill ski slopes.

Cities and regions that can claim to be home to such a leading and talented athlete are few and far between in Canada. Mont-Laurier and the neighbouring regions can do so. Through unrelenting and sustained work Louis-François Gagnon stands as an example for our youths and a first class representative on the international scene.

Aware that such endeavours require financial support, area residents have begun collecting funds to help finance the training of this outstanding athlete, and I commend them for that.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon the Minister of Finance rose in the House to tell ordinary Canadians that "in my job on Bay Street I took a cut in salary."

The fact is that the Minister of Finance was Executive Vice-President of Dominion Securities when he took his cut in salary, a job that paid him approximately \$100,000 a year, almost 20 years ago. Today, that would be approximately \$350,000.

The finance minister's sob story that he had to surrender some of his champagne wishes and caviar dreams when he was a big shot on Bay Street just does not compare with the plight of working people and the hardship of thousands of Canadians who rely on food banks every month to put a meal on the table or Canadians who cannot afford a decent place to live.