

S. O. 21

[Translation]

TAX REFORMCHANGES EFFECTED DUE TO PRESSURES FROM LIBERALS AND
GENERAL PUBLIC

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) will announce changes in the White Paper on Tax Reform. Tomorrow we will know whether the Government intends to remedy the injustice done to Canadian families as a result of the deindexation of family allowance and lowering the eligibility ceiling for child tax credit. Tomorrow, we will find out whether senior citizens have been heard and a tax credit has been reinstated. Mr. Speaker, there is one reason to rejoice, although that reason has hardly been mentioned recently because of various Government scandals. I am referring to the fact that the Government, as a result of pressure from the Liberals and Canadians in general, has decided to backtrack on its option to tax food.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should thank Canadians for the work they have done in this respect. It is the fourth time the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party, has made the Conservative Government change its mind. First it was on the deindexation of old age security pensions, then the cuts in unemployment insurance benefits, the 10 per cent tax on drugs for cardio-vascular diseases and now the tax on food.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PARTICULAR REQUIREMENTS IN ABITIBI

Mr. Guy St. Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, since 1984, the people of Abitibi have been aware of some very specific problems in connection with the economic development of their vast territory. The Government of Canada has taken the lead in working together with municipalities and private enterprise to rejuvenate the Abitibi economy.

With the advent of tax reform, we will have to further stimulate our economic growth by creating a fund for the economic diversification of Northern Quebec, which will reflect the importance of giving young people the option of staying in Abitibi, and by establishing a program that will stimulate the development and use of new technology in a region that is still too dependent on its resource industries.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the particular needs of the Abitibi area, and we will need a support fund of \$100 million to achieve the objectives I just mentioned.

[English]

RAILWAYS

REQUIEM FOR PASSING OF CABOOSE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, this week will be a week to remember as one of the saddest weeks in Canadian history. The railways have been given permission to get rid of the caboose, against the claims of public safety and the well-being of railroaders.

As we contemplate waving goodbye to the caboose, it is important to remember that this week we could also be waving goodbye, as a result of the Mulroney—Reagan trade agreement, to a great many other things that Canadians value but which their Government is determined to take away from them in the name of being more competitive with the United States, which is the main argument the railways used for cabooseless trains.

The departure of the caboose is all about what is called harmonization through deregulation and free trade, the handmaidens of a new era in the exploitation of working people.

Perhaps if the Government is not prepared to respect the wishes of railroaders with respect to the caboose, or anything else for that matter, it will at least show some respect for retired railroaders and finally say what it intends to do about the CN pension plan and the demands that CN pensioners have been making for years.

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FISHERIESGULF OF ST. LAWRENCE SHELLFISH INDUSTRY—STATEMENTS
MADE BY OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Mr. Gerald Comeau (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians realize that the public must be alerted and kept informed of the problems found in certain shellfish products in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Yesterday opposition Members were naming other shellfish products not part of the general alert. By association these Members were suggesting that other shellfish may also have similar problems. These kinds of comments are not at all helpful. Members of the Opposition should know better and, if they do not, it is up to the Atlantic Coast opposition Members to explain to their colleagues the harm that is being done.

On behalf of Atlantic Canadians I am calling on these politicians to forget partisan politics. You have made your points. Don't kill the industry.