

*Oral Questions***LABOUR RELATIONS**GRAIN HANDLERS' DISPUTE—REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION TO
END WORK STOPPAGE

Mr. Geoff Wilson (Swift Current—Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, my question concerning the Thunder Bay dispute is for the Minister of Labour who will know that prairie farmers already devastated by low international grain prices can ill afford to pay while the grain companies and the unions play. Will the Minister consider today giving the required notice of intention to bring forward legislation putting an end to a stand-off which has the potential to cost Canadian farmers millions and to undermine Canada's export reputation?

• (1150)

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, it is because of my colleagues' concern and the concern of all other colleagues in this House on the Thunder Bay situation that I appointed the best person in the land to go to Thunder Bay to get the parties together and mediate the issue. It would be premature for me, I think, to comment on that option at this point since there is progress.

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FINANCE

TAX REFORM—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Speech from the Throne suggests a program of comprehensive tax reform. Will the Minister of Finance shortly be producing a White Paper outlining the Government's proposals for this comprehensive tax reform? If so, when will the paper be available and will the Government be expecting the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to conduct public hearings across the country to get public input to the reform?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the direct answer to the Hon. Member's question is that at some time during the course of this month I propose to make a speech on the question of tax reform to try to give some guidance to the country on the direction we want to go as a Government in tax reform. I hope this will generate a good deal of discussion and debate which will help in the course of the normal consultations that I have during the fall. Following that I will be preparing some specific proposals to put before the House.

Mr. Shields: Mr. Speaker, may I have a supplementary?

Mr. Speaker: It is unusual, but in the spirit of generosity, which I hope will be noticed, I shall allow a supplementary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shields: May the spirit forever remain in the House, Mr. Speaker.

My supplementary question is for the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker. Was the mediator given a deadline to resolve the dispute?

Ms. Copps: Wrong question.

Mr. Speaker: My generosity has had to be brought abruptly to a close.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Member's supplementary question should have been addressed to another Minister.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORTREQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF DECISION CONCERNING CN
SHOPS IN MONCTON

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

How can the Minister justify supporting a decision that puts 650 workers at the CN workshops in Moncton out of work, without having read the internal study on CN's repair facilities? How can he justify supporting this decision?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have made no decision in connection with the matter to which the Hon. Member refers. That was a painful business decision made by the Canadian National Railway Company which, in 1978, was directed by the then Liberal administration of this country that it had to get on its own. It was going to be relieved of certain debts at that time and from then on it had to operate to make a profit, break even, or generate its own cash resources itself.

The CN Railway Company has come to a decision based on the fact that it has certain heavy car shop facilities. Of the three facilities it has in Canada only one is needed in future, the one that is located in the west where most of the business now is. That decision was CN's. We are, and CN is, doing everything to ameliorate that decision in Moncton. We will continue to do that and to encourage the re-employment of as many people as possible of those who must be laid off.

[Translation]

PEOPLE OF THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES—GOVERNMENT
POSITION

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the same Minister.