

precise information? Would he explain to the House why he persists in leading people astray by misleading statements?

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Mr. Guy St-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Canada Post Corporation.

In 1986, the Canadian government advised Canada Post Corporation that it was reducing the subsidies for air transport services. Canada Post never informed the northern regions of these cuts and since 1986 has never increased its rates for commercial shipments of food and medicine to these northern regions.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Can the minister tell me why Canada Post Corporation did not increase its postal rates in 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989 for northern regions?

[English]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member indicates, there has been a reduction in the postal subsidy for northern rates. The subsidy has been reduced by \$1 million a year.

For the first two or three years the post office was able to make up those reductions by various efficiency gains. Those efficiency gains are no longer possible. Thus adjustments were made this year.

As a result of discussions and representations by the hon. member and others, there has been a 5 per cent decrease in the announced rates and a freeze on those rates for the next year while the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development undertakes an investigation to see how in fact the needs of northerners can be looked after, while at the same time respecting the fact that we have a \$30 billion deficit to deal with.

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OLDER WORKER ASSISTANCE

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour.

Oral Questions

Last week the minister announced that \$13.1 million had been allocated to assist some 216 laid-off workers in Quebec in specific industries who may be eligible for assistance under the Program for Older Worker Assistance. Given that there have been a multitude of closings across this country, can the minister today give a detailed breakdown of the moneys from the Program for Older Worker Assistance that have been allocated to all other provinces, industries and companies?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I obviously do not have at my disposal all the details sought by the hon. member of the Opposition, but I can tell him that so far federal and provincial committees in three provinces have dealt with lay-offs in each of the provinces. We are now looking into 49 lay-offs affecting 1,200 people, older workers, whom we will help with POWA, and I will be pleased to send him details of what has been spent up to now.

[English]

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, during the briefings that I had with Labour Canada, and all through the process on the bill when it was going through the House, one of the things that was stipulated was that the numbers would not play a specific role.

Can the minister assure us that in a small community where there are 5 to 10 or 15 to 20 workers laid off, something which would have an impact equal to some areas of Canada where 200 or 300 workers are laid off, that these people will be treated in the same manner?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to confirm for my colleague that POWA has indeed been designed with the necessary flexibility to help workers 55 and older in communities and places with smaller populations.

In co-operation again with the provincial committees, we adopted rules requiring that the number of unemployed or laid-off people be proportional to the population involved in the same kind of activity in each municipality.

So far, each of these committees in each of the three provinces has performed admirably, to the satisfaction of provincial and federal authorities.