

Oral Questions

However, what we hear every day from the members of the Reform Party is that we are supposed to cut back on support for the unemployed, cut back on programs for medicare, cut back on payments for senior citizens.

The member should join us in a solid attack on unemployment and help create jobs for Canadians through small business, through wise investments, through government getting its act in order. We are on the right track. We are not where we want to be and we are going to keep working.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORTATION IN REMOTE AREAS

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Transportation deregulation in Canada has had a negative impact in that it brought down the level of service and made it more expensive to travel to remote areas. The Minister of Transport talked with fervour of action and co-operation. I should remind him that he was asked three times by Rural Dignity of Canada to hold public hearings on regional transportation.

My question is quite simple: When will the minister take action on the request of Rural Dignity and hold public hearings on transportation in remote areas?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, coming as I do from the northern part of New Brunswick, I can tell the hon. member I am quite familiar with the challenges the transportation network in Canada must meet. Over the years, public consultations in which many members took part were held about all issues concerning VIA Rail.

There is a national consensus on the need for a national highway network throughout Canada. But all those consultations and all the findings always come up against the same problem. I would be ready to hold public hearings to look for ways and means to finance the transportation services that are needed. We did identify problems, we did listen to people, and we continue to do so. We have consultations with provinces and interest groups, but the big problem nobody has ever found a way to solve is the financial problem.

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, if the minister admits there is a serious problem, how does he intend to solve it since the cost of regional transportation is rising at the expense of citizens? And how does he intend to solve this problem and help people find solutions?

[English]

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): It is a very good question, Mr. Speaker.

The need to find solutions and to prepare proposals that we can present to the House and to the people of Canada are what we are working on every day.

• (1145)

We expect to come before the House to present what we consider to be alternatives to existing situations, but I want to point out that the fundamental problem does not change. It is how to finance an efficient national transportation system that includes road, rail, maritime and air.

No one professes, and certainly not the Minister of Transport, to have the answer to all those problems. We have studied the problems to death. We know the solutions rest entirely on our ability to pay for that affordable integrated national transportation system. That is what we will try to present to the people of Canada and to the House as soon as we can.

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PUBLICATIONS

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West): Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Given the frugal style of our current Prime Minister and members of Parliament, with no Cadillacs, no massive redecorating and no Gucci shoes, what plan does the minister have to review the printing budgets of various crown corporations and government agencies so that the publications reflect this image, particularly with respect to cutbacks in the costs of producing flashy annual reports?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for bringing the matter to the attention of the House both in the question today and in the member's statement a few days ago.

Crown corporations operate independently. They make their own decisions about their annual reports. Indeed their annual reports are frequently used as sales tools in advertising and promotion of their products or services.

I appreciate the point the hon. member makes. Frugality is a style of the government. I will bring that to the attention of crown corporations and ask that they look at the cost factor in what they are putting together and look at the recyclable aspect of the paper they are using.

I invite the ministers to whom many of these crown corporations report to join me in bringing it to their attention and asking them to review it.