

S. O. 21

[Translation]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE—REQUEST FOR MORATORIUM ON LAY-OFFS IN ORDER TO OBTAIN BETTER SERVICE

Mr. Guy St. Julien (Abitibi): For several months, Mr. Speaker, the residents of Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Chapais and Chibougamau, strongly supported by various local interest groups such as mayors, chambers of commerce presidents, businessmen, CN employees and other people, have been urging the CN to impose a moratorium on lay-offs and provide better service.

Here are a few examples of bad service: On January 24, 26 and 27, 1987, Senneterre-Garneau train No. 830 was cancelled because no locomotive was available. That is the kind of service we get back home. We have asked CN management to impose a four-month moratorium on lay-offs, long enough to study the problems experienced by the railway company.

The CN's February 13, 1987 answer to our request is unacceptable.

Surprisingly enough, Mr. Speaker, yesterday, February 17, President and Chief Executive Officer Ron Lawless announced the beginning of a comprehensive study on the company's administrative structure. The memorandum reads as follows: The study is being made by a select group of senior officials assisted by the Booz-Allen and Hamilton consulting firm. Over the coming weeks agents of the consulting firm, accompanied by representatives of the services involved, will visit network facilities to observe and define the CN administrative process.

Hopes are now being dampened by some CN heads, but when reservations are expressed about the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, I stand up and fight back.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

THE BUDGET—EXPECTATIONS OF CERTAIN CATEGORIES

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, in a few hours the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) will make his third Budget presentation. We should say his third and a half Budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that elderly Canadians have every right to expect the Government to redress some of its injustices towards them ever since the Conservative Government was elected in 1984. Naturally, I am referring to making all persons living alone, and all others who are single, separated or divorced eligible for the spouse's allowance; second, reimbursing immediately the 35,000 early retirees who have been deprived of their unemployment insurance benefits; third, continuing a real reform concerning retirement policies, the indexation of private pension plans, and increasing public assistance benefits; fourth, as promised by the Government in

1984, making sure that the three million homemakers will be covered under the Quebec and Canada Pension Plans; and fifth, with respect to family policies, restoring the full indexation of family allowances.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by expressing the hope that at 4.30 this afternoon the elderly and families in Canada will hear good news.

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● (1410)

[English]

CANADA WINTER GAMES

SUCCESSFUL OPENING—TRIBUTE TO WORK OF LOCAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZERS

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, on Friday I predicted that Sunday's official opening of the 1987 Canada Winter Games would be the best ever, and it was. We were honoured by the Prime Minister's (Mr. Mulroney) presence and that of his wife. Cape Breton has warmly welcomed our Prime Minister and looks forward to his return.

Yesterday the very competent, capable, and athletic Minister of State for Sport (Mr. Jelinek) officially opened the ski venue at Cape Smokey, Victoria County. Hundreds of volunteers from Victoria County are working to ensure that the ski events go well, and they are, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Cape Breton have reason to be proud. More than 6,000 volunteers are participating in the operation of the Games. As part of the celebrations a cultural festival is also being held. The talent of our region is being put on national display. I want to congratulate my constituents and all Cape Bretoners for this great start. I am proud to say that I represent Cape Breton.

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PESTICIDES

FARMERS' COMPLAINTS AGAINST CHEMICAL COMPANIES

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, Members know that farmers do not have the time or the money to fight the farm chemical manufacturers in court when pesticides do not do the job. Many farmers have written to me about this problem expressing their frustration. One farmer writes:

I believe you're right when you say the problem is widespread, only we seem to have no recourse.

Another farmer didn't bother to fight back. He said:

I felt I would be at great odds to do so.

Yet another farmer said the following: