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My colleagues from western Canada will attest that travelling of late has been nothing short of horrendous. This past Monday, for example, it took me seven hours to arrive here from my riding of Edmonton East. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, such travel can be exhausting, inconvenient, and can only impede our efforts to serve Canadians better.

Commendation should be extended to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Cadieux). When the talks broke down the Minister acted swiftly in appointing a mediator with instructions to resolve the impasse with all possible haste. The Canadian public was again held at ransom as labour and management resorted to strike and lock-out. Surely there must be some better method of settling disputes and differences.

Travelling Canadians will now be assured of being home for Christmas with family, friends, and loved ones.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

LUBICON LAKE INDIAN BAND—REQUEST FOR MEDIATION OF LAND CLAIM DISPUTE

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, for almost 50 years the Lubicon Lake Indian Band in northern Alberta has struggled for a resolution of its outstanding land claim. The people are still waiting for the land they are entitled to and were promised almost 50 years ago.

Negotiations are stalled at the present time because the federal Government has refused the band's request for a mediator. Surely it is reasonable to request mediation in a dispute that has dragged on for so long. The proposed mediator is a highly respected former federal Conservative Justice Minister, the Hon. E. Davie Fulton, who has carefully examined the Lubicon Lake situation and is willing to serve in that capacity.

The federal Government, however, is ignoring this opportunity for a just settlement. Instead, the federal negotiator is working out a deal with the province without the band's involvement. The negotiator has said that he "can make a deal with the province" and the Lubicons are going to have to accept it. "They will have to be left holding the bag."

In Canada we take pride in our record on human rights. That record, however, is a blemished one, and the Lubicon Lake issue proves the point.

• (1410)

AGRICULTURE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR FARMERS

Mr. John Gormley (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I would like personally to thank the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), the Ministers of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) and Finance (Mr. Wilson), and all of my colleagues on the government side of the House for their timely assistance package for agriculture and western farmers.

The initiative includes a 1987 Special Canadian Grains Program payment of \$1.1 billion, farm fuel tax rebates for two additional years at a cost of \$400 million, \$100 million will be committed to soil conservation, and the Farm Credit Corporation will receive an additional \$330 million over the next three years for debt restructuring.

Farm Debt Review Boards will be extended until 1991, and \$750 million of the Western Grain Stabilization Plan debt will be written off and new measures brought in to include all western farmers in stabilization.

In the last election campaign the Government made a commitment to farmers across Canada. These new initiatives illustrate our belief in standing up for western farmers.

The NDP is completely devoid of any agricultural policy. As farmers all too well know, the Liberals never acted responsibly on behalf of farmers. The Mulroney Government continues to listen and deliver for agriculture.

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TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

CONSULTANTS' REPORT ON DANGERS TO HIGHLY POPULATED CENTRES

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, the transportation of dangerous goods by rail is a matter of great concern in major centres in Canada, including Toronto. In 1979 we in the Toronto and Mississauga area had the near tragedy of a derailment of railway cars containing dangerous chemicals. Ever since then measures have been implemented to make the carriage of dangerous goods more safe.

Currently, a task force set up by the Government is looking into the rail transportation of dangerous goods. The IBI Group consultants' summary report which they commissioned refers to the risk that is much greater when goods are carried through highly populated centres than when they are carried further north. The report states that there is a "basic trade-off between public safety and over-all cost," in bringing goods through Metro.

I note with alarm the prospect of northern railway tracks and central Ontario railway tracks being shut down and urge