

I urge the Minister of National Health and Welfare to respond to the Assembly of First Nations inquiry, to listen to native people and to respect their choice for child care services for their children. The time for study is over. The time for action is now.

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ROYAL WINNIPEG BALLET

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, last night's gala performance of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet was a tremendous and exhilarating event. A celebration of 50 years of entertaining people through the finest of ballet, interpreting a story, theme, or rendering emotions through the artistry of dance and music brought the packed audience to a frenzied excitement.

I am sure that all members of Parliament would want to praise the Government of Canada for its wonderful initiative in supporting the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. The funds will be used to defray some of the costs of activities marking the dance company's fiftieth anniversary.

• (1410)

Founded in 1939, and given its Royal Charter in 1953, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet is the oldest dance company in Canada. It is appreciated for both its classical and modern repertoires. Two famous graduates of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School have been award winning Evelyn Hart and the late David Perigrine.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, which will be on tour for 20 weeks this year, is known for the number of visits it makes abroad and for the immense success of these visits. A gold winner in Paris, Varna and Tokyo, the company has earned an international reputation.

[Translation]

I take this opportunity to wish the Royal Winnipeg Ballet much success in the next 50 years.

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[English]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, the Draconian cuts announced yesterday by the Minister of Transport constitute yet another arrogant

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and abusive Tory tactic to destroy one of our national institutions. Why else would the Minister cut early morning train service from Canada's fifth busiest station, Kingston, to Canada's largest city, Toronto? This is a service that carried over 76,000 passengers last year according to the minister's own figures. Why else cut this train that serves Napanee, Belleville, Trenton, Port Hope, Cobourg and Oshawa? Why else cut redcaps who help the elderly, the infirm and the handicapped?

The cut of the Kingston-Toronto train makes it impossible for someone from Kingston to go and spend a day in Toronto and return on the same day. It is regressive. It is stupid. It will lessen travel in the corridor, travel that the minister in his statement yesterday admitted was vital for the future of VIA Rail.

The minister's announcement that VIA is for sale represents the total dismantling of a major Canadian asset owned and operated by Canadians. The Minister should be ashamed.

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VIA RAIL

Mr. Al Johnson (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Transport made one of the most courageous moves in the history of Canada. Through the restructuring of VIA Rail he has taken the first major step toward developing a rational transportation system in Canada.

While some people in Calgary may be disappointed at the reduction in their service, virtually all understand and applaud the minister's efforts to cut spending and reduce the deficit.

We hope now that the minister will do everything in his power short of introducing new subsidies to facilitate and encourage the introduction of private enterprise solutions that will expand and vastly improve rail transportation to and from Calgary.

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COMMENTS OF FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James): Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the finance committee has reached a new low. Yesterday, he managed to insult the entire population of western Canada.