

and defend their Premier and their constituents and what their own party is calling for.

Surely that is a democracy. They know that this is the single biggest tax grab in the history of this country.

**Mr. Oberle:** Be truthful.

**Mr. Nystrom:** The member from British Columbia says, "be truthful". That is what he says. I am talking about the people of this country and that they are saying that this is the single biggest tax grab in the history of this country. Here he is criticizing the people of this country. Every single Premier in this country, including his hero Vander Zalm, is saying no to this grief and suffering tax.

Here is the member from Prince George, whose hero is Premier Vander Zalm. Vander Zalm is saying no and yet he is not falling into line. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, why does the member from Prince George not reflect what his constituents are saying? They are saying no to this tax. They are saying it is the biggest tax grab in the history of this country. They are saying it is a very regressive tax. They say it is going to throw this country into recession. They are saying it is going to be inflationary. They are saying it is going to be tough on ordinary folk and the poor people in this country.

It is about time that the member from Prince George spoke his mind in this House of Commons, put his job as a cabinet minister on the line and defended the interests of his constituents and the interests of the people of British Columbia. Is it any wonder why the Conservative Party across the way, the 22 per cent—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The hon. member will have 14 minutes left in his debate plus 10 minutes for questions and comments.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this day.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

---

#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

#### S. O. 31

### STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[English]

#### VIA RAIL

**Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough):** Mr. Speaker, on January 15 nearly 3,000 VIA workers lost their jobs as a result of the federal government slashing 17 VIA routes across the country.

For the past three weeks, these laid-off workers have been waiting to receive their record of employment, which is a necessity when filing for unemployment insurance. Without this record, workers cannot receive unemployment insurance. Nor can they receive income security, as this is dependent upon the amount received from the UI fund. The legal limit for the provision of a record of employment by the former employer is five calendar days from the interruption of work.

How can these people be expected to look after themselves, much less their dependents, while they are forced to wait for their UI cheques? How can the government allow a Crown corporation to break the law with such blatant disrespect for workers and their families?

VIA has blamed the delay upon Canada Post. This is an unacceptable excuse for the workers and should be unacceptable for the government.

\* \* \*

#### NATIONAL UNITY

**Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, the city of Sault Ste. Marie is under siege. We are called bigots and racists. This debate is about Canadian unity and I ask the media and all politicians to bring the debate to a higher level.

Condemning Canadian citizens does nothing to improve the mood in my community or in the country. There was a demonstration last night in Sault Ste. Marie to protest council's decision. Francophones and others are justifiably offended and justifiably fearful. They are a threat to no one and deserve to be treated with dignity.

Yes, we have problems in our community. Yes, there is divisiveness and, yes, there is tension. Outside interference from whatever source or side at this point is not helpful and will only aggravate the tension. Give us some